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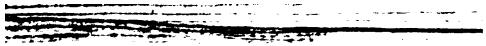

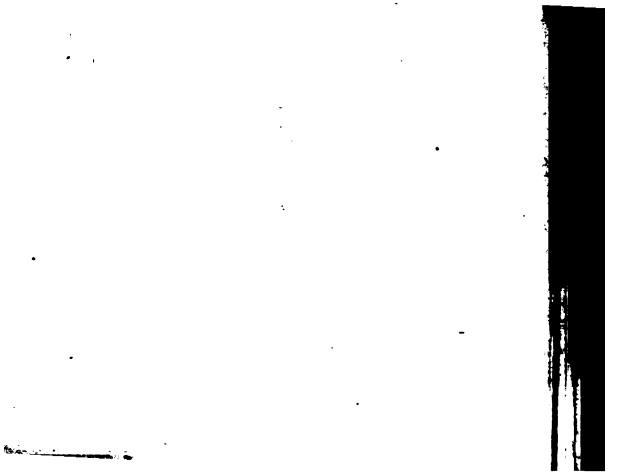

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BRITISH THEATRE.

VOL. XXIV.

BELL's

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CONSISTING OF

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THE

LADY's LAST STAKE;

OR, THE

WIFE's RESENTMENT.

A

COMEDY,

By COLLEY CIBBER, Esq.

ADAPTED FOR

THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOK,

By Permission of the Manager.

The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation.

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TO THE MOST NOBLE THE

MARQUIS OF KENT.

LORD CHAMBERLAIN

OF HER MAJESTY'S HOUSEHOLD, &c.

HE utmost success I ever proposed from this play, s, that it might reach the taste of a few good lges, and from thence plead a sort of a title to ur Lordship's protection; and if the most just and idid critics are not the greatest flatterers, I have not led in my proposal. As for those gentlemen that ust themselves forward upon the stage before a wded audience, as if they resolved to play themves, and save the actor the trouble of presenting m; they indeed, as they are above instruction, so y scorn to be diverted by it, and will as soon allow a good voice as a genius. I did not intend it uld entertain any, that never come with a design sit out a play; and therefore, without being much rtified, am content such persons should dislike it. I would have been less instructive, I might easily ve had a louder, though not a more valuable ap use. But I shall always prefer a fixed and general ention, before the noisy roars of the gallery. A y without a just moral, is a poor and trivial unrtaking; and it is from the success of such pieces,

that Mr. Collier was furnished with an advantageous pretence of laying his unmerciful axe to the root of the stage. Gaming is a vice that has undone more innocent principles than any one folly that is in fashion, therefore I chose to expose it to the fair sex in its most hideous form, by reducing a woman of honour to stand the presumptuous addresses of a man, whom neither her virtue or inclination would let her have the least taste to. Now 'tis not impossible but some man of fortune, who has a handsome lady, and a great deal of money to throw away, may, from this startling hint, think it worth his while to find his wife some less hazardous diversion. If that should ever happen, my end of writing this play is answered; and if it may boast of any favours from the town, I now must own they are entirely owing to your Lordship's protection of the theatre: for, without a union of the best actors, it must have been impossible for it to have received a tolerable justice in the performance.

The stage has for many years, till late, groaned under the greatest discouragements, which have been very much, if not wholly, owing to the mismanagement or avarice of those who have awkwardly governed it. Great sums have been ventured upon empty projects, and hopes of immoderate gains; and when those hopes have failed, the loss has been tyrannically deducted out of the actor's salary. And if your Lordship had not redeemed them, they were very near

being wholly laid aside, or, at least, the use of their labour was to be swallowed up, in the pretended merit of singing and dancing. I don't offer this as a reflection upon music, (for I allow and feel its charms) but it has been the misfortune of that, as well as poetry, to have been too long in the hands of those whose taste and fancy are utterly insensible of their use and power. And though your Lordship foresaw, and experience tells us, that both diversions would be better encouraged under their separate endeavours, yet this was a scheme, that could never be beat into the impenetrable heads of those that might have honestly paid the labourers their hire, and put the profits of both into their own pockets. Nay, even the opera, though the town has neither grudged it pay nor equipage, from either the wilfulness or ignorance of the same general, we see, was not able to take the field till December.

My Lord, there is nothing difficult to a body of English people, when they are unanimous, and well commanded. And though your Lordship's tenderness of oppressing is so very just, that you have rather stayed to convince a man of your good intentions to him, than to do him even a service against his will: yet since your Lordship has so happily begun the establishment of the separate diversions, we live in hope, that the same justice and resolution will still persuade you to go as successfully through with it.

But while any man is suffered to confound the industry and use of them, by acting publicly, in op

position to your Lordship's equal intentions, under a false and intricate pretence of not being able to comply with them; the town is likely to be more entertained with the private dissentions, than the public performance of either, and the actors in a perpetual fear and necessity of petitioning your Lordship every season for new relief.

To succour the distressed is the first mark of greatness, and your Lordship is eminently distinguished for a virtue that certainly claims the next place to it. The disinterested choice and manner of your Lordship's disposing places in your gift, are proofs that you always have the claims of merit under your first and tenderest consideration. And from the assurance of this thought, my Lord, the stage, the poets, and the players, lay their cause, their hopes, and utmost expectations at your Lordship's feet for support and protection.

I am,

My Lord,

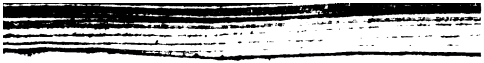
Your Lordship's most humble,

And most obedient servant,

COLLEY CIBBER.

ıse dissolveless fetters too, must be
atest happiness or misery;
bject ought, in reason, more to please ye,
attempt to make those chains sit easy?
'n the noose so many souls seem curst,
bo's in fault?—For when you've said your worst,
lid feel it happiness——at first.
'e our author drew you once the life
'less husband, and enduring wife,
ber patience (though much out of fashion)
d, at last, her wanderer's inclination.
there are, who still arraign the play,
ame temper shock'd, as who should say——
e, for a dull husband, was too much to pay.
been strangled sleeping, who should hurt ye?
provok'd——revenge had been a virtue.
ll then——to do his former mercy might

Not to be cheated with his civil face,
But scorns his falsehood, and to prove him base,
Mobb'd up in hack triumphant dogs him to the place.
These modish measures, we presume, you 'll own,
Are oft what wives of gallantry have done;
But if their consequence should meet the curse
Of making a provok'd aversion worse,
Then you his former moral must allow,
Or own the satire just he shews you now.
Some other follies too, our scenes present,
Some warn the fair from gaming, when extravagant.
But when undone, you see the dreadful stake,
That hard-press'd virtue is reduc'd to make;
Think not the terrors you behold her in,
Are rudely drawn t' expose what has been seen;
But, as the friendly muse's tenderest way,
To let her dangers warn you from the depth of play.



Dramatis Personæ.

COVENT GARDEN.

		Men.
Lord WRONGLOVE,		Mr. Wroughton.
Lord GEORGE BRILLIANT,		Mr. Lewis.
Sir FRIENDLY MORAL,	-	Mr. Aickin.
BRUSH,	- -	Mr. Kennedy.
		Women.
Lady WRONGLOVE,	-	Mrs. Bates.
Lady GENTLE,	- -	Mrs. Warren.
Mrs. CONQUEST,	-	Mrs. Wells.
Miss NOTABLE,	-	Mrs. Brown.
Mrs. HARTSHORN,	-	Mrs. Pitt.

THE

LADY'S LAST STAKE.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Lord Wronglove's *Apartment.* *Lord* WRONGLOVE *alone, musing.*

Lord *Wronglove.*

My wife——as abundance of other men of quality's wives are——is a miserable woman—ask her the reason, she 'll tell you—husband: ask me, I say, wife—all's entirely owing to her own temper.

Enter Mrs. HARTSHORN.

Mrs. *Harts.* My Lady desires to know if your Lordship pleases to spare her the chariot this morning?

Lord *W.* Hah! That 's as much as to say, I have a mind to guess when, and how you go out this morning. [*Aside.*] Well, the chariot is at her service. [*Exit* Hart.] This continual jealousy is insupportable. —What 's to be done with her? What 's her complaint? Who 's the aggressor? I 'll e'en refer the

matter fairly to my own conscience, and if she cast me there, I'll do her justice; if not, though the cost were ten times hers, I'll make myself easy for the rest of my life—Let me see,—"as to the fact I'm charged "with, viz. That I have feloniously embezzled my "inclinations among the rough and smooth con- "versation of several undaunted gentlewomen, and "so forth.—That, I think, since it must be proved "against me, I had best plead guilty to.—Be it so "——Very well——A terrible charge indeed: and "now—"

Enter BRUSH.

Brush. My Lady desires to know if your Lordship pleases to dine at home to-day.

Lord *W.* Right! Another gentle enquiry. [*Aside.*] Why, tell her 't is impossible to guess, but her Lady- ship may do as she pleases. [*Exit* Brush.] But to go on.—"Now let 's hear the defendant, and then pro- "ceed to judgment and damages. Well! the de- "fendant says, that 't is true he was in love with "Madam up to her proud heart's wishes, but hoped "that marriage was his end of servitude, that then "her wise reserve, her pride, and other fine lady's "airs would be all laid aside.——No,—her Ladyship "was still the same unconquered heroine: if being "endured could give me happiness, it was mine; if "not, she knew herself, and should not bend below "her sex's value—I bore this long, then urged her "duty; that this reserve of humour was inconsistent

"with her being a friend, a wife, or a companion. "She said 't was Nature's fault, and I but talked in "vain. Upon this I found my patience began to have "enough on 't: so I e'en made her invincibleship a "low bow, and told her I would dispose of my time "in pleasures which were a little more com-at-able; "which pleasures I have found, and she——has found "out, but truly she won 't bear it: and though she "scorned to love, she 'll condescend to hate; she 'll "have redress, revenge, and reparation; so that if I "have a mind to be easy at home, I need but tremble "at her anger, down on my knees, confess, beg par-"don, promise amendment, keep my word, and the "business is done. Now venerable, human consci-"ence, speak, must I do this only to purchase what "the greatness of her soul has taught me to be indif-"ferent to? Am I bound to fast, because her Lady-"ship has no appetite? Shall threats and brow-beat-"ings fright me into justice, where my own will 's a "law?—No, no, no; positively no: I am lord of my "own heart, sure, and whoever thinks to enter at my "humour, shall speak me very fair. Most generous "conscience, I give you thanks for this deliverance! "And since I 'm positive, I 've little Nature on my "side too, Madam may now go on with her noble re-"sentment if she pleases."

Enter BRUSH.

Brush. Lord George Brilliant gives his service, and if your Lordship's at leisure he 'll wait upon you.

Lord *W.* Give my service, say I shall be glad to see him. [*Exit* Brush.] D'ye hear! Brush! [Brush *returns.*

Brush. my lord?

Lord *W.* Is the footman come back yet?

Brush. Yes, my lord, he called at White's, but there's no letter for your lordship.

Lord *W.* Very well. [*Exit* Brush.] I can't imagine the meaning of it. Sure I have not played with the babyfaced girl, 'till I 'm in love with her; and yet her disappointing me yesterday does not slip so easily through my memory, as things of this gentle nature used to do. A very phlegmatic symptom.——"And "yet if she had come, 'tis ten to one, the greatest "relief she could have given me, would have been a "fair excuse to get rid of her———Hum! ay, ay, "all's safe. She has only stirred my pride I find, my "heart's as sound as my constitution, and yet her not "coming, nor excusing it, puzzles me."

Enter BRUSH.

Brush. A letter for your lordship.

Lord *W.* Who brought it?

Brush. Snug, the chairman.

Lord *W.* Oh! 'tis right, now we shall be let into the secret. [*Reads.*] 'I won't beg your pardon for not coming yesterday, because it was not my fault, but indeed I'm sorry I could not.' Kind, however, though it is possible she may lie too. 'To be short, 'old Teizer smoaks the business, poss."—By her stile, the child seems to have a great genius for iniquity:

who the deuce is old Teizer? Oh! that must be uncle, Sir Friendly Moral! 'Smoaks the business, s!' Very well. 'For he watched me all day, as e had been in love with me himself, but you may end upon me this afternoon about five, at the same e, till when, dear Dismal, adieu!' [*Tears the let-*] Well said! 'egad, this girl will debauch me! at pity 'tis her person does not spread like her unstanding! But she is one of Eve's own sisters, born oman. Bid the fellow stay for an answer. [*Exit* Br.

Enter Mrs. HARTSHORN.

Harts. My lady desires to know if your lordship ases to drink any tea?

Lord W. What a mess of impertinence have I had s morning! But I'll make my advantage of this. *ide.*] Pray, thank your lady, and tell her I desire 'll be pleased to come and drink some with me. *xit* Harts.] When a man has a little private folly on his hands, 'tis prudent to keep his wife in good nour, at least, till the frailty's thoroughly com-ted. [*Exit.*

Enter Lady WRONGLOVE *and* BRUSH.

Lady W. Where's my lord?

Brush. I believe he's writing in his closet, madam? your ladyship pleases, I'll go and see.

Lady W. No, stay—I'll—I'll——Wait without.

Brush. Jealous, by Jupiter! I must look sharp I see. [*Retires.*

Lady *W.* Writing! then I am confirmed. Not day passes without some fresh discovery of his perfid ousness. "This usage is beyond patience. Sure m "think that wives are stocks or stones, without "sense of injuries, or only born and bound to be "them! But since his villanies want the excuse "my deserving them, I'll let him see I dare rese "them as I ought. I'll prove them first, and th "revenge them with my scorn." Hum!—what 's her A torn letter! Ha! some fresh, some undiscover slut!—Here, Hartshorn!

Enter HARTSHORN.

Go to the door this minute, and tell the impude fellow there, that my lord says the letter requires r answer; and if he offers to bring any more, he have his limbs broke. [*Exit* Hartshor

Brush. [*Behind*] Ha! this was a lucky discovery Between my lord, or my lady, it's hard if I don mend my place by it.

Lady *W.* It is not yet so torn, but I may read ——'T will cost his wit some trouble to evade th proof, I 'm sure. I' ll have it pieced, and send it hin I' ll let him see I know him still. A base, a mea ——"Huh! now he 's nauseous to me!" [*Exi*

Re-enter Lord WRONGLOVE *with a letter.*

Lord *W.* Here, give this to the porter.

Brush. My lord, the porter's gone. [*Smilin*

Lord *W.* Gone! how so?——What does the fellow sneer at?

Brush. My lord, I beg your lordship's pardon for my boldness, but perhaps it may be more useful to you than my silence: I saw something that happened just now——

Lord *W.* What's the matter?

Brush. While your lordship was writing within, my lady, I fancied by her looks, suspected something by Hug's being at the door (for she enquires every morsel's business that comes to speak with your lordship) at here she came, and bid me go out of the room. pon which I made bold to watch her at the door, here I saw her pick up the pieces of that letter your rdship tore just now: and then she flew into a violent passion, and ordered the porter to be sent away ithout his answer.

Lord *W.* No matter; you know where to find him.

Brush. Yes, my lord, he plies at White's.

Lord *W.* Run after him quick, tell him it was a istake, and that's his answer. [*Gives a letter. Exit* ush.] Let me see—I shall certainly hear of this letr from my wife; and 't is probable her pride will ve as much pleasure in reproaching me, as her goodture would in finding me innocent. I must take re not to let her grow upon me. "To bear the open insolence of a wife, is a punishment that exceeds both the crime and the pleasure of any favours the sex can give us. But why am I so apprehensive of a poor woman's being out of humour? My gra-

" vity for the matter would be as ridiculous as her " passion. The worst on't is, that in our matrimo- " nial squabbles, one side's generally forced to make " a confidence with their servants: I am reduced now " to trust this fellow—But I can make it his interest " to be secret———"

Enter HARTSHORN *with tea.*

Harts. Here's your lordship's tea.

Lord *W.* Oh, thank you, Mrs. Hartshorn!—Where's your lady?

Harts. My lord, she's not very well, and desired me to give your lordship this. [*Gives a letter.*

Lord *W.* So, now it comes——Let's see——Ha! the child's letter, faith, carefully pieced together again ———How! here's some of her own hand too. [*Reads.*] 'Something has happened that makes me unfit for tea; I would tell you what, but that I find 'tis the fashion for married people to have separate secrets.'—— Humph! This is speaking pretty plain. Now, if I take no notice of it, I shall have her walk by me in the house with a dumb, gloomy insolence for a fort- night together. Suppose I let her—No—better talk with her——The most violent jealousy is often subject to the grossest credulity. I'll make one push for't however; 'tis certainly the most prudent to come off if I can——Mrs. Hartshorn, pray, tell your lady I must needs see her; I have something to say to her that will make her laugh, though she were dying of the vapours.

Mrs. *Harts.* My lord, I'll tell her. [*Exit.*

Lord *W.* Or suppose her jealousy is too wise for my wit, say she won't be imposed upon. At worst, I'll carry it on with such an excess of assurance, that I'll give her the mortification of thinking that I believe I have deceived her. "She shan't have the pleasure of "knowing she insults me; I'll crush the very hope of "her resentment, and by seeming always easy myself, "make her jealousy a private plague to her insolence. "She shall never catch me owning any thing. Her "pride would have its end indeed, if she could once "bring me to the humble shame of confession."—Oh, she's here!

Enter Lady WRONGLOVE *very grave.*

Lady *W.* D'ye want me for any thing?

Lord *W.* Ay, child, sit down. Hartshorn told me you were not well. So I had a mind to divert you a little. Such a ridiculous adventure sure! Ha, ha, ha!

Lady *W.* I am as well as I expect to be, though perhaps not so easy to be diverted.

Lord W. Ha, ha ha! no matter for that, if I don't divert you—Here, take your dish, child—Ha, ha, ha!

Lady *W.* I sha'n't drink any.

Lord *W.* Ha, ha, ha! Do you know now, that I know what makes you so out of humour? Ha, ha!

Lady *W.* Upon my word, you have a good assurance. [*Turning away.*

"Lord *W.* Ha, ha, ha! Do you know too, that I "am now insulting you with the most ridiculous ma-

" lice, and yet with all the comical justice in the " world? Ha, ha!"

Lady *W.* But, my lord, all this is mightily thrown away upon me. I never had any great genius to humour, besides, that little I have, you know, I have now reason to be out of. And to spare you the vain trouble of endeavouring to impose upon me, I must tell you, that this usage is fit only for the common wretches you converse with.

Lord *W.* By my soul, I don't believe the like ever happened in all the accidents of human life! Such an incredible, such a romantic complication of blunders, " that, let me perish, if I think Moliere's *Cocu Ima-* " *ginaire* has half so many turns in it, as you shall " hear, child." In the first place, the porter makes a blunder, by mistaking the place for the person, and enquires for me, instead of one at my house; my blockhead, Brush, here, carries it on, and with his own blundering hand gives his mistress's letter to me. No sooner was that mistake set to rights, but the pieces of the letter fall into your hands, and (as if fortune resolved the jest should not be lost) you really fancied it came from a mistress of mine; and so, by way of comical resentment, fall out of humour with your tea, and send it to me again, ha, ha, ha!

" Lady *W.* This evasion, my lord, is the worst stuff " that ever any sure was made of.

" Lord *W.* 'T wont do, I find, but 'tis no matter, " I'll go on. [*Aside.*] Ha, ha! And so, upon this, " what does I, but instead of making you easy, lets

"you go on with the fancy, till I was thoroughly con-
"vinced your suspicion was real, and then comes me
"about with the most unexpected catastrophe, and tells
"you the whole truth of the matter, ha, ha, ha!

"Lady *W.* A very pretty farce indeed, my lord!
"but by the thinness of the plot, I see you have not
"given yourself much contrivance.

"Lord *W.* No, upon my soul, 't was all so directly
"in nature, that the least fiction in the world had
"knocked it all to pieces."

Lady *W.* It's very well, my lord; I am as much di-verted with the entertainment, I suppose, as you ex-pected I should be.

Lord *W.* Ha, ha! Why, did I not tell you I should divert you?

Lady *W.* You have indeed, my lord, to astonish-ment. Though there's one part of the design you left out in the relation, and that was the answer that you wrote (by mistake I suppose) to your man's mistress.

Lord *W.* Oh, that—why, that was—that was—the —the—the—the answer? Ay, ay, the answer was sent after the porter; because you know, if he had gone away without it, 't was fifty to one the poor fellow's mistress would not have been reconciled to him this fortnight. But did you observe, child, what a coarse familiar stile the puss writes?

Lady *W.* Coarseness of stile is no proof that the puss might not be mistress to a man of quality. And I must tell you, my lord, when men of quality can find their account in engaging with women whose

highest modesty is impudence, methinks they should not wonder if men of their own principles, whose impudence is often mistaken for wit, should talk their wives into the same failing.

Lord *W.* Let me die, child, if you ha'n't a great deal of good sense. [*Sipping his tea.*

Lady *W.* 'T is not the first time that an affronted wife has convinced the world of her personal merit, to the severe repentance of her husband.

Lord *W.* Abundance of good sense.

Enter BRUSH.

Brush. Lord George, my lord.

Lord *W.* Desire him to walk in——Nay, you need not go, child.

Lady *W.* I am not in a humour now for company—There's a couple of you. [*Exit.*

Lord *W.* What pains this silly woman takes to weary me! always widening the breach between us, as if 't were her interest to have no hopes of an accommodation, as if she felt no pain in making her own life wretched, so she could but imbitter mine——Let her go on—Here's one that always sweetens it.

Enter Lord GEORGE.

Ah, my Gregory! "Kiss."

Lord *G.* "And kiss, and kiss again, my dear—— "By Ganymede, there's nectar on thy lips. Oh, the "pleasure of a friend, to tell the joy!"——Oh, Wrong-love! such hopes!

Lord *W.* Hey-day! what's the matter?

'. Such soft ideas! such thrilling thoughts of easure!——In short, I have too much on't.

'. Thou strange piece of wild nature!

G. Death! I tell thee, man, I 'm above half er.

W. One would rather think half the seas were u; for, in my mind, you don't talk like a ove water.

G. Pr'ythee, forgive me. How is it possi- ould, when all my faculties are drowned in joy?

G. Then, pr'ythee, my dear, float about, wn the sluice of your rapture, before the ness of your words gets over the banks of derstanding." In plain common sense, let's business.

'. Why, the business, in one word——it's to tell you.

'. Impossible! Will you drink any tea?

G. Tea! thou soft, thou sober, sage, and le liquid, thou innocent pretence for bring- wicked of both sexes together in a morning; nale tongue-running, smile-smoothing, heart- , wink-tipping cordial, to whose glorious y I owe the happiest moment of my life, let prostrate thus, and s—p, s—p, s—p, thus ee. [*Kneels and sips the tea.*

W. Come, come, you silly, affected rogue, nd talk at least like a fool to be understood.

G. Don't you think there's pleasure in af- , when one's heartily in good-humour?

[*Very affectedly.*

" Lord *W.* Impertinent puppy! Drink your tea."

Lord *G.* Oh, Wronglove! I have been drinking tea— [*Transported.*

Lord *W.* With some laughing ladies, I presume, whose incessant concussion of words would not let you put in a syllable, and so you are come to ease yourself upon me.

Lord *G.* Then, pr'ythee, be a friend, and let me speak.

Lord *W.* Not only blank verse, but rhyme, if you please. In the name of nonsense, go on.

Lord *G.* Swear then.

Lord *W.* Swear!

Lord *G.* Ay, swear.

" Lord *W.* Blood!———

" Lord *G.* Psha! Pr'ythee.

" Lord *W.* Nay, pray, sir, give me leave to play the " fool in my turn; the moment you speak to be un- " derstood, I'll secure you a reasonable answer.

" Lord *G.*" Swear then never (to any mortal) to trust from you, to hint, or speak, of what I shall discover.

" Lord *W.* Upon my honour.

" Lord *G.* Honour! The common hackney-oath " of fops, rakes, and sharpers: swear me by some- " thing dearer than thy eyes, than life or liberty.

" Lord *W.* Indeed!

" Lord *G.*" Swear me by all thy tenderest hopes in love: by thy soft sighs of pain, proceeding from thy pleasure; swear———

W. I do, by something dearer to me yet—— ıhort stay after possession, by my chaise after ing, by my easy chair after dinner, and by ıottle after the bill's paid, I will be secret.

G. Ay, now be perjured if thou darest—Know ·at last, that generous lovely creature has said ıy back, that I am the most sober, good-hu- and agreeably inoffensive young fellow, that ıe into a civil family. To be short, she has : a general invitation to her house; upon which aken lodgings that look full into her back indow, and drank tea with her alone this

W. Some humble sinner, whose only charm is ıother man's mistress, I'll lay my life on't. Well, and what did you give her?

G. A bleeding heart, all studded o'er with of her eyes' own making.

W. That is, you pulled out your watch as you ng away, and she took a fancy to one of the Though by the device I presume it was only a n bauble; so 'tis probable you might not have off much cheaper at mother Davis's."

G. "Profanation!"——To be serious then at have solid hopes of my Lady Gentle.

W. Hoh! hoh! Oh, thou vain, thou senseless all this mighty rapture then only from a fine ; being commonly civil to thee? The mere : effect of her good humour and breeding.

d *G.* Psha! tell not me of whence it is born, suffice I've form'd it into hope; let your tame

" civil, secret sighers, such as never think the fair one " sure till they hear the tag of her lace click, think it " no cause for joy; but I have a soul that wakes, that " starts up, at the least dawning cranny of a hope, and " sets my every faculty on fire, She must, she must, " she must be won——For since I have resolved to " hope, my fancy doubly paints her beauties——Oh, " she 's all one fragrant field of charms, to pamper up " the blood of wild desire.

" Lord *W.* Ah, George, what luscious morsels then " must her husband take of her!

" Lord *G.* Why didst thou mention him?—Death! " I can't bear that thought——Can she love him? " ——Oh, the verdant vales, the downy lawns of fruit. " ful bliss, the overflowing springs of cool refreshing " beauty, that happy dog must revel, range, and " sport in!

" Lord *W.* Nay, the woman's a fine creature, that 's " certain; it 's a thousand pities one can't laugh her " out of that unfashionable folly of liking her hus- " band, when here 's a man of undisputed honour too, " that knows the world, that understands love and " ruin to a tittle, that would at the least tip of a " wink rid her of all her incumbrances, set her at the " very top of the mode, and qualify her for a separate " maintenance in the twinkling of an hackney-coach " window.

" Lord *G.* Can you be a moment serious?

" Lord *W.* Faith, sir, if I am not, 'tis only to make " you so."

Lord *G.* You seem to think this business impracticable.

Lord *W.* Why, truly, for any great progress I see you have made, I don't think but it is: and if you'll take my opinion of the woman, I do think, provided you'll allow there's any such thing in nature, she's one of impregnable virtue: that you can no more make a breach in her honour, than find a flaw in her features. Bate but a little her over-fondness for play, she's the perfection of a good wife.

Lord *G.* Oh, your servant, sir! you own she has a Passion for play then.

Lord *W.* That I can't deny; and what's worse, I doubt she likes it a great deal better than she understands it. I hear she has lost considerably to the Count of late.

Lord *G.* You must know then, that the Count is my engineer: he and I have a right understanding; whenever she plays we are sure of her money. Now he has already stripped her of all her running cash, besides eight hundred pounds upon honour: for payment of which I made him send a downright pressing letter by me this morning. I observed her a little startled when she read it, and took that opportunity to screw myself into the secret, and offered my assistance. To be short, I addressed myself with so much tender regard to her confusion, that before we parted, I engaged this afternoon to lend her a thousand pounds of her own money to pay him.

Lord *W.* I confess your battery's raised against the only weak side of her virtue. But how are you sure

you can work her to push her ill fortune? She may give over play. What will all your advantages signify, if she does not loose to you more than she can pay?

Lord *G.* Oh! I have an expedient for that too—— Look you, in short, I won't spoil my plot by discovering it; a few hours will make it ripe for execution, and then——but

There is no fear that I should tell
The joys that are unspeakable.

" Lord *W.* Ha, ha! and so you are really in love, to " the very extremity of passion!

" Lord *G.* Pr'ythee, don't laugh at me. [*Affectedly.*

" Lord *W.* Don't you think I have heard you with " a great deal of patience?

" Lord *G.* Nay, I know we puppies in love are tire- " some."

Lord *W.* And so you think that all this extravagance of your stile and gesture must have convinced me that you really care sixpence for this woman?

Lord *G.* Would you have me swear?

Lord *W.* Ay, come, do a little.

Lord *G.* Why, then, by all the sacred ties of honour, friendship, and restless love, had I but five thousand pounds in the whole world, and nothing else could purchase her————

Lord *W.* I dare swear you'd give it every shilling, that you really could love her, though it were only to get rid of your passion for Mrs. Conquest.

Lord *G.* Why, then, look you————

Lord *W.* You may swear till you are black in the face; but you love her, her only, indeed you do;

your passion for Lady Gentle is affected. Not but I grant you'll pursue it, for when nothing's in view you're indefatigable. You are a little uneasy at the smallness of Mrs. Conquest's fortune, and would fain persuade yourself you are in love in another place—— But, hark'e—you'll marry her——And so, if your chariot's at the door, you shall carry me to White's

Lord *G.* Why, then (except myself) thou art positively the most impudent fellow upon the face of the earth. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II. SCENE I.

Continues. *Enter* LADY WRONGLOVE.

Lady Wronglove.

"WHY am I thus uneasy? Sure I am unreasonable "in my temper; I over-rate myself——For if the "husband's violation of his marriage-vow is in itself "so foul an injury, whence is it that the law's so spa- "ring in its provision of redress? And yet 'tis sure "an injury, because just nature makes the pain of "bearing it outrageous. Oh, hard condition! For if "e'en that pain provokes the wife to move for repara- "tion, the world's gross custom makes her perhaps a "jest to those who should assist her. If she offends, "the crime's unpardonable, yet if injured, has no "right to compensation. It may be usual this, but "sure 'tis unnatural.

Enter Mrs. HARTSHORN.

Mrs. *Harts.* Madam, the porter's come back.

Lady *W.* Bring him in. [*Exit* Mrs. Harts.

Enter Porter.

Well, friend, how far have you followed them?

Port. Why, an' it please your honour, first they both went in Lord George's chariot to White's.

Lady *W.* How long did they stay?

Port. Why, an' it please your honour, they staid, as near as I can guess, about——a very little time.

Lady *W.* Whither did they go then?

Port. Why, then they stopped a little at the coach-maker's at Charing-cross, and looked upon a small thing there they call a booby-hutch, and did not stay; and so then stopped again at the fruit-shop in Covent-Garden, and then just went up to Tom's coffee-house, and then went away to the toy-shop at the Temple-gate, and there they staid I can't tell you how long, an' please you.

Lady *W.* Did they buy any thing?

Port. Yes, a number of things, truly.

Lady *W.* Were they mostly for men's use, or how?

Port. Nay, I don't know; such sort of trangams as the gentry use: I remember one was "such" a kind of a small scissars-case "as that by your honour's side," my Lord Wronglove bought it.

Lady *W.* So! that was not for me, I am sure. [*Aside.* Do you know what he paid for it?

Fort. Troth, I can't say I do. They came away, an't like your honour, but I did not see them pay for any thing—And so after that———

Enter Mrs. HARTSHORN.

Mrs. *Harts.* Young Mrs. Notable is come to wait upon your ladyship.

Lady *W.* Here, come in the next room, friend, I must employ you farther. Desire her to walk in, I'll wait upon her presently. [*Exeunt.*

Re-enter Mrs. HARTSHORN *with* Miss NOTABLE.

Harts. If your ladyship pleases to walk in, my lady knows you are here, madam. Dear madam, how extremely your ladyship's grown within this half year!

Miss *Not.* O, fie, Mrs. Hartshorn, you don't think me taller, do you?

Harts. O, dear madam, to an infinity. "Nay, and "so plump too, so fresh looked, so round hipped, and "full-chested——that"——I 'm sure, madam, he! he! If I were a young gentleman of quality, madam, he! ——Your ladyship will pardon my freedom—I protest, he! he!——— [*Curtseying and simpering.*

Miss *Not.* I vow, Mrs. Hartshorn, you have a great deal of good-humour; is not your lady very fond of you?

Harts. Truly, madam, I have no reason to complain of my lady; but you must know, madam, of late there have been some concerns in the family between my lord and she, that I vow, my poor lady is seldom in humour with any body.

Miss *Not.* I'm mighty sorry for that.——What, does my lord give her any occasion for jealousy, think you?

Mrs. *Harts.* Occasion, quoth'a! O, lard! madam —But 't is not fit for me to speak.

Miss *Not.* [*Aside.*] I'm glad to hear this—'T is possible her ladyship may be convinced that fifteen is as fit an age for love, as six and twenty. And if her jealousy's kindled already, I'll blow it into a blaze before I part with her.

Mrs. *Harts.* Madam, I hear my lady's coming. I humbly take my leave of your ladyship: your ladyship's most obedient servant. [*Impertinently cringing.*

Miss *Not.* Your servant, good Mrs. Hartshorn; if you 'll call to see me, I have a very pretty new cross, that would become your neck extremely,——You 'll pardon me.

Mrs. *Harts.* Dear madam, your ladyship is so obliging—I shall take an opportunity to thank your ladyship— [*Exit.*

Enter Lady WRONGLOVE.

Miss *Not.* My dear, dear lady Wronglove! you 'll forgive me; I always come unseasonably, but now 't is pure friendship, and my concern for you that brought me.

Lady *W.* My dear, you know I am always glad to see you—but you 'll excuse me, if I am not the company I would be; I am mightily out of spirits of late. I hope Sir Friendly's well.

Miss *Not.* After the old rate, past the pleasures of life himself, and always snarling at us that are just

come into 'em. I do make such work with him——— He reads me every morning a lecture against lightness, and gadding abroad, as he calls it; then do I teize him to death, and threaten him, if he won't let me do what I please, I 'll choose a new guardian that will.

Lady *W.* Come, don't disoblige him, my dear: for, if you 'll let me speak as a friend, you have a good natural town-wit, I own, and a great many pretty qualities; but, take my word, your interest and reputation will find a better account in trusting them under your uncle's conduct, than your own.

Miss *Not.* I don't know that; for all this tedious self-denying course of philosophy is only to make me a good old woman: just the condition of the miser's horse—when he had taught him to live upon one oat a day, the poor creature died. So I am to spend all my youth in learning to avoid pleasures, that nature won't let me be able to taste when I am old—which is just as much as to say, don't drink while you are thirsty; because if you stay while you are choaked, you won't care whether you drink or no.

Lady *W.* What an improving age is this! [*Aside.* But, my dear, pray let me talk to you a little seriously, and I hope it won't be lost upon you; for you have an understanding that's uncommon at your age. I have observed, among all the unfortunate of our sex, more women have been undone by their wit than their simplicity: wit makes us vain, and when we are warm in the opinion of it, it sometimes hurries us through the very bounds of prudence, interest, and reputation;

have a care of being singled out by the men. Women, like deer, are safest in the herd; she that breaks away from her acquaintance, may be most followed indeed; but the end of the chace is very often fatal.

Miss *Not.* But pray, madam, now with submission, I think your argument won't hold; for a deer's business is to escape, but a woman's is to be caught, or else the world's strangely altered.

Lady *W.* Honourably, I grant you.

Miss *Not.* Honourably! That is to stand still like a poor dumb thing, and be tamely shot out of the herd. Now I think a young creature, that fairly trust to her heels, and leads you twenty or thirty couple of brisk young fellows after her, helter-skelter, over hills, hedges, bogs, and ditches has ten times a fairer chance for her life; and if she is taken at last, I will hold twenty to one, among any people of taste, they 'll say she 's better meat by half.

Lady *W.* Well said, child! Upon my word you have a good heart: the address of a lover uses to be more terrible at your age. You seem to have resolved upon not dying a maid already.

Miss *Not.* Between you and I, Lady Wronglove, I have been positive in that this twelvemonth.

Lady *W.* Why then, since we are upon secrets, my dear, I must tell you, the road you are in is quite out of the way to be married: husbands and lovers are not caught with the same bait.

Miss *Not.* With all my heart; let me but catch lovers plenty, I 'm satisfied: for if having one's will is

the pleasure of life, I 'm sure catching a husband is catching a Tartar. No, give me dear, precious liberty —content, and a cottage.

Lady *W.* And would not a good husband content you?

Miss *Not.* And why must I expect a better than any of my neighbours? Do but look into the private comforts of the dear, fond, honourable couples about this town; and you 'll find there's generally two beds, two purses, two tables, two coaches, two ways—And so in most of their pleasures an unmolested separation is the only chain that keeps them together. Now pray, Madam, will you give me leave to be free, and ask you one question?

Lady *W.* Freely, my dear.

Miss *Not.* Then did you yourself, never, upon no occasion, repent your being married?

Lady *W.* That question's very particular, my dear.

Miss *Not.* Perhaps you 'll pardon me, when I give you my reasons for asking; but if you never did repent it, I am resolved I won't be the first that shews you occasion to do it.

Lady *W.* I don't know, my dear, that ever I gave any body reason to think me uneasy at home; but you speak, child, as if you knew something that ought to make me so.

Miss *Not.* Then, depend upon 't, unless I were sure you were uneasy already, I'd as soon be locked up as tell you any thing.

Lady *W.* Well, suppose I am uneasy.

Miss *Not.* Pardon—I can't suppose it—But suppose you are not, then I should play a fool's part, I'm sure, to make you so.

Lady *W.* I am sure you know something of my Lord; pray tell me.

Miss *Not.* Since I see you are uneasy, and I know you love but too well; upon condition you'll think I only do it to help your cure, I will tell you: for when a woman is once sure she has a substantial reason to hate her husband, I should think the business must be half over.

Lady *W.* You make me impatient.

Miss *Not.* Let me think a little to soften it, as well as I can. What great fools these wise over-grown prudes are, to tell the greatest secret of her life to a girl? To own her husband false, and all her sober charms neglected——But if she knew that young Pill Garlick were the occasion of it too. Lard! how her blood would rise! What a disfigurable condition would my poor head-clothes be in? [*Aside.*] Well, madam, to begin then with the end of my story; in one word, my lord is grossly false to you, and to my knowledge has an appointment from a mistress this very afternoon, to meet her in a hackney-coach in the road to Chelsea.

Lady *W.* All this, my dear, except their place of meeting, I knew before; but how you come to know it, I confess, amazes me.

Miss *Not.* Look you, madam, all I know is this—— While my Lord Wronglove and Lord George stayed

at our house to speak with my Lady Gentle this morning, I happened to sit in the next room to them, reading the last new play: where, among the rest of their precious discourse, I over-heard my Lord Wrong-love tell Lord George, the very appointment, word for word, as I have told it you.

Lady *W.* You did not hear her name?

Miss *Not.* No, nor what she was: only that she's pretty and young: for I remember Lord George ridiculed his fancy, and called her green fruit. Little, if you please, says t'other, but riper I'll warrant her: and I had rather gather my fruit myself, than have it, like you, through the several hands that bring it to Covent Garden.

Lady *W.* The brutal thought!

Miss *Not.* When my lady came down, she made them stay to dinner; which was no sooner done, but I immediately slipped away to tell you of it: for methought I was as much touched with the wrong done to your ladyship, as if it had been to myself.

Lady *W.* My dear, I am extremely obliged to you.

Miss *Not.* I'm sure I meant well——For to know the worst, is not half so bad as to mistrust it.

Lady *W.* Infinitely obliged to you.

Miss *Not.* Oh! she's deliciously uneasy. [*Aside, and pleased.*] I'll tell you what I would advise your ladyship to do: call for your hood and scarf, and an hackney-coach to the door this minute—In the mean time I'll step home again (for I'am sure they are not gone yet, the tea was but just call'd for when I came

away) and the moment my Lord Wronglove takes his leave, I'll send you word: then you may clap on your mask, drive after him, and in five minutes, I'll lay my life, you catch them together.

Lady *W.* Why then, if you'll do me the favour to send me that word, my dear, I shall have leisure in the mean time, perhaps, to improve upon your advice.

Miss *Not.* If you'll let one of your people send my servant for a chair, I'll go this minute.

Lady *W.* Here——Who's there?

[Mrs. Hartshorn *at the door.*

Miss *Not.* Now I think I shall be even with his honour, I'll teach him to tell of favours before he has 'em at least: if I had not discovered him, in my conscience he had let madam discover me. [*Aside.*

Lady *W.* I would not but have known this for the world.

Miss *Not.* I am over-joyed I can serve your ladyship: you'll excuse my running away.

Enter Mrs. HARTSHORN.

Mrs. *Harts.* Here's a chair, madam.

Miss *Not.* Well, I'll take no leave, for I'll call again by and by, to know your success. Your servant. [*Runs off.*

Lady *W.* Get me a hood and scarf, and a mask, and bid one of the footmen call an hackney-coach to the door immediately. [*Exit* Hartshorn.] "What will "become of me? Should not I strive to hate him? I

" think I almost do. Is he not contemptible? Fogh! " What odious thing must this be, that he converses " with? A woman without modesty has something " sure of horror in her nature! What is it then in " men, that over-looks so foul a coarseness in the " heart, and makes them infamously fond of shame " and outside? I blush to think on't." How tame must he suppose me, if I bear this usage? I'll let him see I have a spirit daring as his own, and as resentful too. " Since he dares be base I cannot bear but he " should see I know him so." To sigh in secret o'er my wrongs, and pay his falsehood the regards I only owe his truth, is more than nature can submit to.

" *When once the nuptial bond's by him destroy'd,*
" *The obligations of the wife are void.* [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

Changes to Lady Gentle's *House.* Lady GENTLE, Lord WRONGLOVE, *and* Lord GEORGE, *at a tea-table.*

Lady *Gent.* [*To Lord* Wronglove.] Come, come, my Lord, you must stay another dish, indeed.

Lord *W.* Upon my faith, madam, my business is of the last concern; your ladyship knows I don't use to start from good company.

Lady *Gent.* Well, I e'en give you over, you grow perfectly good for nothing.

Lord *W.* The truth on 't is, madam, we fond husbands are fit for nothing—but our wives.

Lady *Gent.* Come, none of your raillery upon one that 's too good for you.

Lord *W.* Why, she has some high qualities, indeed, madam, that I confess are far above my merit; but I 'm endeavouring every day to deserve them, as fast as I can.

Lady *Gent.* Go on, you deserve nothing at all, now you disoblige me.

Lord *W.* I shall take a better opportunity to make myself amends for going so soon; I am your ladyship's most humble servant. Mrs. Conquest, pray take care of Lord George.

Mrs. *Con.* O, he shall want for nothing, my Lord; pray do you take the same care of the lady you are going to.

Lord *W.* Ha, ha, ha! [*Exit.*

Lord *G.* My Lord Wronglove is a very pretty gentleman, and yet how unaccountable 't is to hear good sense jest upon marriage!

Lady *Gent.* My lord has so much good sense, that he does not mean what he says, I dare swear for him.

Lord *G.* Indeed, madam, I can't think he does: I never saw any thing amiss in his actions, either at home or abroad.

Lady *Gent.* Nor I indeed: and I think your lordship very much to be commended; you love to put the fairest construction upon things; 't is a certain sign of good sense, and good principles.

Lord *G.* Your ladyship has so much of both, that I can't help being proud of any thing that recommends me to your esteem.

Lady *G.* Upon my word, my lord, you have a great share on't, and I think very deservedly: 't is not a common thing in this town, to find a gentleman of your figure, that has courage enough to keep marriage in countenance, especially when 'tis so much the mode to be severe upon 't.

Lord *G.* Now that to me is an intolerable vanity, to see a man ashamed of being honourably happy, because 't is the fashion to be viciously wretched. I don't know how it may be with other people, but if I were married, I should as much tremble to speak lightly of my wife, as my religion.

Mrs. *Con.* O! the hypocritical monster! When he knows I know, if he were to be hanged, he 'd scarce think it a reprieve to be married. [*Aside.*] "There 's "roguery at the bottom of all this, I'm sure—The "devil does not use to turn saint for nothing."

Lady *Gent.* I am in hopes your ladyship's good opinion of marriage will persuade you not to be long out of it: we that feel the happiness of a condition ourselves, naturally wish our friends in it.

Mrs. *Con.* What do you think of me, my Lord, you know I have been about you a great while?

Lord *G.* Fy, fy! you marry! A mere rake!

Mrs. *Con.* O but I fancy now, a man of your sobriety and stayed temper, would soon reform me.

Lord *G.* This subtle devil "smoaks me!"——We

are mortals, faith—It shews her a little jealous however. [*Aside.*

Mrs. *Con.* I'll be whipped if ever you marry more to your mind; what signifies two or three thousand pounds in one's fortune, where you are sure it would be made up in good-humour and obedience.

Lord *G.* And considering how intimate a footing you and I have always conversed upon; what a venerable figure should I make in the solemn authority of an husband, pretending to command you.

Lady *Gent.* O! if you were married, there would be but one will between you.

Lord *G.* There's the danger, madam: there being but one, we should certainly squabble, who should have it. I should like Mrs. Conquest, perhaps, for my wife's companion: one as a light allay to the softness of the other's temper: but if I were once fix'd in love, and should unfortunately bolt upon the least glimpse of jealousy, I am such a slave to tenderness, I know 't would break my heart.

" Mrs. *Con.* Now could I wash his face with my tea." [*Aside.*

Lady *Gent.* Well, I am confident my lord would make an extreme good husband.

Lord *G.* I don't know but I really might, if I could persuade any woman beside your ladyship to think so.

Mrs. *Con.* How artfully the monster screws himself into her good opinion; I must take him down a little —[*Aside.*] Pray, my lord, how many women have you had of late, by way of balm, to heal the slight wound I gave you?

Lord *G.* Upon my faith, madam, I had my wound and cure from the same person: my passion for you went forward like Penelope's web; whatever your eyes did in the day, a very short reflection upon your temper unravell'd at night; so that if you will needs know the truth, I have not been reduc'd of late to apply myself for relief to any body but your ladyship. Ha! ha! ha! ha! [*Affects an insulting laugh.*

Mrs. *Con.* Well, he has a glorious assurance!

Lord *G.* I fancy, Mrs. Conquest, you measure my principles by your own; for by your question you seem to think me a very wild creature.

Mrs. *Con.* O fy, my lord! so far from it, that I never saw any thing so astonishingly modest.

Lord *G.* Not so modest, neither, madam; but if my Lady Gentle will give me leave, I dare use you most intolerably for this.

Lady *Gent.* Ev'n as you please, my lord; for I confess her assurance is enough to dash any one out of countenance.

Lord *G.* Does your ladyship hear that, madam? Remember, now, that I am allowed the modester person; but to let you see, that in a just cause I scorn to take the advantage of my character, I'll lay it aside for once, and with an honest freedom tell you, your attempts upon me are vain; you are homely, downright homely; and if she were not a-kin to me, I would as soon marry my grandmother.

Mrs. *Con.* Ah, poor soul! every body knows, as well as myself, I am more than tolerably handsome:

and (which you are ready to tear your flesh at) the whole town knows you think so.

Lord *G.* Madam—did your ladyship ever hear so transcendant an assurance?

Lady *Gent.* Nay, I 'm on your side, my lord—I think you can't be too free with her.

Lord *G.* I 'll tell your ladyship what this creature did once; such an instance of her intrepid self-sufficiency——

Lady *G.* Pray let 's hear it. Ha! ha!

Mrs. *Con.* With all my heart, I 'll be heard too.

Lord *G.* I 'll tell you, madam—About two years ago, I happened to make a country visit to my Lady Conquest, her mother, and one day at the table, I remember, I was particularly pleas'd with the entertainment, and upon enquiry found that the bill of fare was under the direction of Mademoiselle here: now it happened at that time, I was myself in want of a housekeeper; upon which account I thought it would not be amiss, if I now and then paid her a little particular civility: to be short, I fairly told her, I had a great mind to have a plain good housewife about me, and dropt some broad hints, that the place might be her's for asking—Would you believe it, madam, if I 'm alive, the creature grew so vain upon 't, so deplorably mistook my meaning, that she told me her fortune depended upon her mother's will, and therefore she could receive no proposals of marriage without her consent: ha, ha! Now, after that unfortunate blunder of her's, whether I ever gave my lady the least trouble

about the business, I leave to the small remainder of her own conscience.

Mrs. *Con.* Madam, as I hope to be married, the poor wretch fell downright in love with me! for though he design'd only to make two days stay with us, it was above three months before I was able to get rid of him. When he came first indeed, he was a pretty sort of a tolerable impudent young fellow; but before he left us, O, the power of beauty! I most barbarously reduc'd him to a sighing, humble, downright dulness and modesty.

Lady *Gent.* Ha, ha! Pray which of you two am I to believe all this while?

Lord *G.* Madam, if there 's any faith in my senses, her only charms then were, and are still, not in raising of passion, but paste. I own I did voraciously admire her prodigious knack of making cheese-cakes, tarts, custards, and syllabubs; Ha, ha, ha!

Lady *Gent.* Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. *Con.* You see, madam, what 't is to let him be ever so little out of one's hands: now his very modesty is impudence; for to deny his being in love with me to another, is ten times more insolent, than his first owning it to me.

Lady *Gent.* Pshaw, words signify nothing—Did he ever own it under his hand?

Mrs. *Con.* His hand! Ha, ha, ha, madam—as I am a living creature, if I have one, I have five hundred billet doux of his, where he has confess'd such things of my wit and parts, and my eyes, and my air, and

my shape, and my charms, that—Nay, he tells me in one, I have more natural beauties the moment I rise out of my bed in the morning, than the whole drawing-room upon a birth-day by candle-light. There 's for you.

Lord *G.* And she believ'd it, madam—" Ha, ha, " ha! That 's well enough." There's for you, ha, ha, ha!

" Mrs. *Con.* Why, I believe still you think so—— " Then every line of 'em is so cram'd with sincerity, " sighs, hopes, fears, flames, darts, pains, pangs, " and passion, that in my conscience, if a body were " to set 'em on fire, the flame would never go out."

Lady *Gent.* Well, if you are in love, ho, this is certainly the newest way of wooing that ever was.

Lord *G.* Whether I am in love or no, I leave to your ladyship.

Mrs. *Con.* And if your ladyship should give it against him, whether or no I have reason to be vain upon 't, let the world judge.

Lady *Gent.* The world, I believe, will think better of you both when you are married.

Lord *G.* In the mean time, I believe, our surest comfort will be to think well of ourselves, and let it alone. [*All rise.*

Mrs. *Con.* I am glad to find you have modesty enough to suppose marriage would make us think worse of one another.

Lord *G.* O fy! Mrs. Conquest, the more you are known, the more you must be liked. [*Affectedly.*

Mrs. *Con.* Is it then possible that you could like me? [*Affectedly.*

Lady *Gent.* Ha, ha! [*Going to the tea-table.*

Lord *G.* If it were possible I could like any thing out of matrimony, it would be you.

Mrs. *Con.* Well, but tell me do you like me as I am? How do you know but you may persuade me into it?

Lord *G.* Like you—Umph! "I can't tell—let's "see——[*Looking on her.*]——give me your hand.

"Mrs. *Con.* There—— [*Strikes it into his.*

"Lord *G.* Now I must press it gently, to know if "touching you keeps any correspondence with my "heart——Humh!——A well-flesh'd hand indeed! [*Ogling her.*

"Mrs. *Con.* O lud! not so hard though.

"Lord *G.* Now try your other forces—look upon "me.

"Mrs. *Con.* There——— [*Staring wildly on him.*

"Lord *G.* [*Aside.*] She dares not, though in rail-"lery, look kindly on me—I like her for 't—This "over-acted boldness to save her modesty at this time, "looks like secret inclination.

"Mrs. *Con.* Well, how do you find yourself?—"Have I power—Do you burn much?

"Lord *G.* Umph! No: I 'm a little too low for a fever "—There 's a small pulse indeed—Different sexes, "like steel and flint, can't well meet without a sort "of striking light between 'em; not but it goes out "as fast as it comes in—One farther trial of your "power, and I 'll tell you more.

" Mrs. *Con.* Come, come, what is 't? I 'll do 't.

" Lord *G.* Turn away your face, hold your fan " before it. Now draw your hand slowly from me, " and if you would not have me think this lightness " of your humour a direct indifference, let me per- " ceive a gentle hold at parting, as though you left a " tender heart upon the pressure.

[*She does as directed, and runs from him.*

" Mrs. *Con.* Has your ladyship any tea left?"

Lord *G.* Death! that softening touch has shot me to the soul.

" Mrs. *Con.* Let me observe him well, for faith I " try'd my utmost force, and even pleas'd myself in " hopes to touch him. [*Aside.*

" Lord *G.* [*Aside.*] How vain a coxcomb am I? " This girl has tool'd me to believe she likes me—— " That there should be such pleasure in the flattery " of another's good opinion!—There 's something in " the open freedom of her humour, so much beyond " the close reserve of formal prudery, that—death, " if she were of any price but marriage—But I am a " fool to think of her—— [*Walks apart.*

" Mrs. *Con.* Humh! the symptoms are right—hah " ——*Courage, ma fille,* the gentleman has a hole in " his heart yet."

Enter a Servant, *who gives* Lord George *a letter.*

Lord *G.* Oh! there, come in good time—Now to drive out one poison with another—[*Goes to Lady* Gentle.] Madam, if your ladyship's at leisure—I have *the bills ready.*

Lady *Gent.* I am ashamed to give your lordship this trouble.

Lord *G.* A trifle, madam, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, if your ladyship pleases to look upon 'em, I think they are all hundred pounds. The rest I have about me in gold.

Lady *Gent.* If your lordship pleases, we'll reckon in the next room—Mrs. Conquest.

Mrs. *Con.* I'll wait upon your ladyship.

[*Exeunt Lady* Gentle *and Lord* George.

——Eight hundred pounds, and the rest in gold, upon her bare word of honour! He'd hardly make that compliment, only to give me jealousy——The mortal's in earnest, that's certain——And what wicked way he proposes to find his account with her I am afraid to think—Let me see, I know there will be deep play here to-night; I have a thought in my head, that perhaps may lay a block in his way to her ——Not but if there is such a thing as inpregnable virtue, I dare swear my lady Gentle is mistress of it; but then, on the other side, he has a consummate assurance, that's full as unsurmountable. "And when "the impudent hopes of a lover are like his, covered "with modesty, it alters the case strangely——No "woman can then be positive what will become of "her.——Her not suspecting his design puts him but "in a fairer way of carrying it on—Ah, lud! I don't "like it.—He'll certainly——Well, let him do "what he will, he can't marry her, that's one com-"fort, however." [*Exit.*

ACT III. SCENE I.

Lord Wronglove's *House. Enter* Miss NOTABLE *alone.*

Miss Notable.

So! this has been a day of business—I think now I am pretty even with his lordship; and if I could but draw in Lord George to be his rival now, I should touch the very tip of happiness———For then to have the noise of these two lovers draw two or three score more after me, which it certainly would: for when once a woman 's the fashion, every body follows her she fills like a musick subscription, though there 's nothing in 't, nobody will be out on 't——And then to have the full pleasure of mortifying Mrs. Conquest too, that 's always holding her nose over me, as if I was not fit to be out of my bib and apron. If I don't make as good a rout in the town as she, 't is very hard—sure!—I 'll forbid 'em all to toast her, that 's positive.

Enter Lord GEORGE.

Lord *G.* [*Aside.*] Here she is, faith, and alone: now if I can but flatter her into my party, my business is half over—So! my little Venus!

Miss *Not.* Bless me—This is lucky—I vow, my lord, you frighten me.

Lord *G.* Well, and what makes your pretty ladyship here, now none of the family 's at home?

LADY'S LAST STAKE. *Scene I*

Engr. after

MRS. BLAND, as MISS NOTABLE.

Is Not. So, this has been a day of business.

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Miss *Not.* O! my lady will be at home presently!—but pray how came your lordship here then?

Lord *G.* Why, my life, I chanc'd to be driving by, and perhaps saw you go in. [*Takes her by the hand.*

Miss *Not.* Well, and what then?

Lord *G.* Why then, upon enquiry, I found you were here alone, and that made me come in—My dear Miss! how charming you look to-day!

Miss *Not.* Pshah!

Lord *G.* What 's the matter, my soul?

Miss *Not.* To tell me I look charming, and then call one Miss.

Lord *G.* O! I ask a thousand pardons.

Miss *Not.* No, dear Lord George, never call me Miss again, you do n't call Mrs. Conquest so; and though she 's bigger, and more out of shape, you know, than I, I 'm sure I 'm as much a woman in my heart as she; nay, and in my passions too: for I could kill any woman that would rob me of a lover, and die for the dear man that would not be won from me.

Lord *G.* O, the pretty tenderness! But, my dear, take heed how you look upon me, for I am fam'd for assurance; and if once encourag'd, " 'egad my hope " sets no bounds to it's impudence, but falls down- " right to resolving, and cocks it's hat to the fair " one's face, though in the very fury of her virtue.

" Miss *Not.* I fancy now you are as gentle as the " rest of your brother beaus, whose greatest assurance " is only of bragging of more than you have.

Lord *G.* Nay, if you doubt my virtues, child, I 'll "give you a taste of 'em, my dear. [*Kisses her.*

"Miss *Not.* Hold! hold! O lud! The duce take "you for me.

"Lord *G.* Death! what a pouting lip the rogue "has! 'egad I think my friend Wronglove 's in the "right on't, sure.

"Miss *Not.* Besides, do you think this bullying is "any proof of your courage? [*Affectedly grave.*

"Lord *G.* Why then, my dear, to prevent all mis-"takes for the future, I now give you fair warning— "If you have a mind I should not like you, don't "flatter me any more; for I tell you, I 'm a down-"right believing puppy, and upon the least hint of a "hope, can no more forbear proceeding."——

Miss *Not.* Look you, my lord, all this is but stuff, for, upon my word, you 'll find it no easy matter to flatter me: I know well enough how you 're dispos'd of.

Lord *G.* Why then, by all the pains, pangs, and torments—In short, I 'm a fool; I won't speak a word more to you.

Miss *Not.* Fy! fy! you had better give yourself these airs to Mrs. Conquest.

Lord *G.* I don't know but I had, madam; for I suppose you 'll tell my Lord Wronglove of it.

Miss *Not.* Ah! poor soul! if Mrs. Conquest lik'd you no better than I do my Lord Wronglove, you'd think yourself a miserable creature.

Lord *G.* If Mrs. Conquest lik'd me but half so

well as I like you, I am sure she'd be a miserable creature.

" Miss *Not.* Umh! how can you design upon me so?

" Lord *G.* How can you think to impose upon me " so?"

Miss *Not.* My lord, I shall take it very ill, if you tell me of my Lord Wronglove.

Lord *G.* Then perhaps, madam, I shan't take it well to be told of Mrs. Conquest.

Miss *Not.* My Lord Wronglove!

Lord *G.* Mrs. Conquest!

Miss *Not.* I 'd have you know, my lord, of all mankind, he 's the farthest from my thoughts.

Lord *G.* And I 'd have you know, madam, of all womankind, Mrs. Conquest 's as far out of mine.

Miss *Not.* Lard! the assurance of some men!

Lord *G.* Look you, madam, in short, I can prove what I say; and I hold ten pound of tea to a pinch of snuff, you won't let me prove it: come, and I 'll take the same bet of you, that you don't prove to me, what you said to me of my Lord Wronglove.

Miss *Not.* Come, it 's done!

Lord *G.* Done!

Miss *Not.* Done, for both!

Lord *G.* Done!

Miss *Not.* Why then, to prove that I am innocent of the least inclination for him, I own he has teaz'd me these two months; and because I was resolved to give him his answer and his punishment at the same time, I this very afternoon made him an appointment

—then went immediately and told my Lady Wronglove he was to meet a mistress at such an hour, to my knowledge, and so sent her in a fury after him to catch 'em together.

Lord *G.* But how could you escape yourself, all this while?

Miss *Not.* O! I did not tell her it was I; for as soon as I had blown up her jealousy, I whipt into a hackney-coach, and got to my lord before her, where I just popp'd out my head to him, and told him, in a pretended fright, my lady had dogg'd him, and I durst not stay; then drove away as fast as I could, and e'en left her to make up accounts with him.

Lord *G.* Why then, my life, I do pronounce, that the stoutest wife of 'em all, with the spirit of revenge in her, could not have better bustled through this business than you have.

Miss *Not.* And to let you see, sir, that I never do design him any favour, I give you leave to tell him, that I sent my lady after him——Which if he does, I 'm sure my Lord Wronglove must suspect an intimacy between us. [*Aside.*] Nay, and if you'll but stay a moment, you 'll have an opportunity, for I know he 'll be at home presently.

Lord *G.* Then you are but just come from him!

Miss *Not.* The minute you saw me come in. And now, sir, if you can but give me half as good a proof, that your heart is innocent of Mrs. Conquest——why 't is possible, when you 've been about seven years in the same mind, I may then begin to think whether I shall consider of it or no.

Lord. *G.* A notable encouragement, truly! But to let you see, madam, I can't bear the scandal of a passion I 'm not guilty of, as the last proof of my innotence, if either she doubts of my indifference, or you of my inclination, I am content to own both before your faces.

Miss *Not.* And so afterwards deny both behind both our backs. Indeed you must think again, that won't do—" An old bite."

Lord *G.* Come, I 'll do more—I 'll pretend to trust you with my passion for a third person, and give you leave, in the tenderest touches art or woman's wit can paint it, to tell it that third person, while Mrs. Conquest is by.

Miss *Not.* Uuh! this has a face.

Lord *G.* Nay, with a mask upon 't too; for while I am convincing you I do n't care a button for her; I impose upon a third person, purely to make a secret of my passion for you.

Miss *Not.* Better still—But when I have a mind to pull off the mask, you shan't refuse to show your face —for I don't care a man should be asham'd of his passion neither.

Lord *G.* As you please for that.

Miss *Not.* I begin to like this strangely—This will teize Mrs. Conquest to death—But now the difficulty is to find out this third person—It must be one I 'm acquainted with—What think you of my Lady Wrong-love?

Lord *G.* Umh! No, I don't care to affront the wife of my friend.

Miss *Not.* Ah: do you think any of the sober souls about town are ever angry in their hearts to hear a man likes 'em.

Lord *G.* That 's true; 't is possible her resentment might let a man die in his bed after it——But 't is not worth one's while to quarrel with him, about a woman I don't like.

Miss *Not.* Nay, I would not run you into any hazard, unless 't were upon my own account——And now I think on 't I 'll reserve that quarrel to myself. [*Aside.*

Lord *G.* Come, I have found one—the properest person in the world is my Lady Gentle——You know you are all in a house together; her husband Sir William's in the country, I have no acquaintance with him, and if I lose her's by her, I don't care sixpence.

Miss *Not.* I like your choice very well; but I doubt it will require some art to manage her: for, to say the truth, the woman is most fantastically simple: the very word love out of any mouth but her husband's, will make her start as if a gun went off.

Lord *G.* Therefore, my dear, it must be done as if you did not do it: you must go to her in all the disorder in the world, as if I had the impudence to endeavour to bribe you into my assistance.

Miss *Not.* Right; or I 'll go first and quarrel with my uncle till he makes me cry, and then come in

with my eyes swelled, and sobbing, as if I was almost choak'd with the affront you had offered me, and then call you a thousand villains for daring to propose such an impudent thing to me.

Lord *G.* Admirable!—'Egad, the child's a bar's length in experience above the stoutest of her sex—— Hark! I hear a coach stop.

Miss *Not.* Pshah! Deuce take him, 't is certainly my lord! how shall we do?

Lord *G.* Why, if you 'll give me leave, my life, I 'll call at your house in an hour, and there we 'll settle every point to a tittle.

Miss *Not.* With all my heart; I won't stay for my lady; I 'll go home now: but here comes my lord, you shall see first how I 'll use him.

Lord *G.* Don't trouble yourself, my life, it will only give him a jealousy, and do us no service.

Miss *Not.* Indeed! methinks if I am not afraid of his jealousy, you need not.

Lord *C.* My soul, I ask ten thousand pardons for my stupidity.

Enter Lord WRONGLOVE, *and stops* Miss NOTABLE, *who seems to talk gravely with him.*

Lord *G.* 'Egad, I can hardly believe my senses; if this girl's character were in a play, people that had not seen it would swear the notableness of her head were above nature.

Lord *W.* [*To Miss* Notable.] Did my Lord George tell you I told him that you were to meet me?

Miss *Not.* That's no matter, it's sufficient, I know you told him: but I thought at least you had seen enough of the world to know, that a confidant was the safest disguise for a rival.

Lord *W.* I am sorry your ladyship has such an opinion of me.

Miss *Not.* Indeed, sir, I shall not reproach you; I have satisfied myself in serving you as you deserve for it——There 's one can tell you how too, and so your servant——My lord, you 'll remember. [*To Lord* G.

[*Exit Miss* Not.

Lord *W.* Ha, ha, ha! Why, how now, friend!—What, are you my rival?

Lord *G.* Ha, ha, ha! Why, faith I am very near being one of them; for I believe the child will think she has hard luck, if the whole town is not so in a fortnight.

Lord *W.* But pr'ythee how came she to know I ever made you a confident of my affair with her? I am afraid you have been thoughtless.

Lord *G.* No, by all that is honest—But she has told me more than you could tell me.

Lord *W.* What?

Lord *G.* That she herself told my Lady Wronglove of your appointment with her this afternoon, and (as I suppose you have since found) sent her in a hackney coach after you.

Lord *W.* The devil!

Lord *G.* Nay, 't was a home push, faith!

" Lord *W.* Home, quotha! 'egad it's time for me

" to knock off, I shall never come up with her: but " what could she propose by telling you of it?

" Lord *G.* Why, a fresh lover, I suppose—She " found me a little tardy here in addressing her; and " imagining my small virtue might proceed from a re- " gard to you, to convince me of her indifference to " you, she very fairly told me how she had served " you, to open an easier passage in my conscience for " my passion to her.

" Lord *W.* Sir, I give you joy.

" Lord *G.* And faith, sir, I expect it, though not " as you do, from the green youth of her person, but " the plump maturity of her understanding—in help- " ing me to another.

" Lord *W.* Riddles!

" Lord *G.* To be short; I think I have bit the " babe; for in return, to convince her of my indif- " ference to Mrs. Conquest, I have imposed upon her " to discover my real passion to Lady Gentle, before " Mrs. Conquest's face; and this, sir, with your " leave, is, upon my honour, all the use I design to " make of her.

" Lord *W.* Faith, it is a glorious one—All Machia- " vel was boy's-play to it.—Look you, sir, if you have " a fancy to the small remainder of her composition— " Pray be free———

" Lord *G.* Dear sir, not so much as the squeeze of " her little finger; but I thought I might make bold " with her virtue, and not rob your *goût* of a morsel.

" Lord *W.* Not a step further, faith—I shall e'en

"turn about my nag and go home: a little humble "hare-hunting, by way of taking the air, I can make "a shift to come up to; but to scamper, neck or no-"thing, after a mad galloping jade of a hind, that "will run you strait an end out of a country, requires "a little more mettle than I am master of.

"Lord *G.* Come, come! you are sportsman enough "to know, that as pride first humbles a coquette into "the loosest encouragements to gain a man, so the "same pride very often piques her into the granting "the last favour rather than lose him."

Lord *W.* I am sorry I have made this rout about it, sir; I expect to have my wife shock me too.

Lord *G.* Oh! pray, how did you come off? Did my lady see you in the coach?

Lord *W.* I am not sure, faith; but whether she did or not, she shan't convince me she did.

Lord *G.* Where did you leave her?

Lord *W.* Why, as soon as the child told me from her coach, that my wife was in another behind me, I advised her to go off: then whipt up my wooden glasses, and stood cross the road, to prevent the nymph's being followed; when she was out of sight, I ordered the fellow to drive to town as fast as Black and Bay could lay legs to the ground: and having the fortune of better horses, I just got time enough to stop, and give a fellow a guinea to cut the braces of the coach that came after me; which, while I drove gently on, I saw him do; so e'en came away, and left her ladyship fairly overset in the middle of a swinging shower, at Hyde-Park-Corner.

Lord *G.* How shall she get home?

Lord *W.* Umh! She will have wit enough in her passion, I presume, to send for another coach; or, if not, it will be a very pretty cool walk over the Park for her.

Lord *G.* What an unfortunate creature is a jealous wife! [Brush *whispers Lord* Wronglove, *and Exit.*

Lord *W.* My wife's come home: now, if you have a curiosity, you shall see how I 'll manage her.

Lord *G.* Pray, sir, don't let me be witness of your conjugal douceurs; but if you please, I 'll step into the next room a little, for I have two or three words to write; I must appoint the Count to meet me at Lady Gentle's after the play.

Lord *W.* Do so then—Take this key, you 'll find paper in the bureau.

Lord *G.* Quick, quick, I hear her—*Bon Voyage.*

[*Exit Lord* George.

Enter Lady WRONGLOVE, *as from the Street, in a Hood and Scarf, and her Petticoat pinned up.*

Lady *W.* So, sir, you are come home, I see.

Lord *W.* Yes, madam, and you have been abroad, I see; will you never give over making yourself ridiculous to the very servants? Was this a dress to go out in, or a condition for a woman of your quality to walk home in? Death! what must people take you for?—For shame!

Lady *W.* My Lord, when a husband grows monstrous, a wife may well become ridiculous.

Lord *W.* Look you, madam, while your jealousy keeps within bounds, I shall take little notice of it: but when its idle extravagancies break upon my reputation, I shall resent it as I ought. You may think me an ill husband, if you please; but I won't have the world think so till I give them occasion.

Lady *W.* Insolent!

Lord *W.* I thought I had told you in the morning of a foolish letter, that was brought by mistake to me instead of my servant: your not taking my word, methinks was not over-civil, madam: and your since dogging my servant instead of me, to the very place of appointment, was extremely obliging. The fellow has confessed to me, since he came home, that in his fear to be seen, he got your coach overthrown in the middle of the highway, while you ridiculously pursued him: a mighty reputable figure you must make, while you were getting out of it, no doubt!

Lady *W.* Come, come, my Lord, I have not lost my senses yet—I followed you, and saw you in the coach, when the confident creature reached out to you from another, to tell you, I suppose, that I was just behind you. You may wrong me, but you can never blind me. [*In a scornful smile,*

Lord *W.* Look you, madam, that manner in speaking shews too much transport, and—colour does not become your face.

Lady *W.* [*Taking him up short.*] Some people think it does now: all men are not of your opinion, "my "lord, my complexion may not please you perhaps;

" but I have known many a lover find an appetite only " from a husband's losing it."

Lord *W.* I won't suppose, madam, you'll suffer any man to like you more than he ought to do.

Lady *W.* Oh, sir! don't you depend more upon my discretion than your own——" We wives, as well as " our husbands, love to have some idle body or other " to flatter us into humour, when the time hangs upon " our hands.

" Lord *W.* You are pleasant, madam."

Lady *W.* Marriage would be an unfortunate frolick indeed, if a woman's happiness were to die with her husband's inclinations.

Lord *W.* Waggish, I protest.

Lady *W.* Oh, there's nothing like a modish husband to refine the unbred virtue of a wife into all the pretty liberties in fashion.

" Lord *W.* Good company, or let me die.

" Lady *W.* I knew the day, when my Lady Honey-" Moon would have blushed, almost in tears, at the " alarm of a bare civil thing from any man but her " husband; but from the well-bred example of his " conscience, she has now most undauntedly got the " better of her own, and stands buff at the head of " the mode, without the least tincture of virtue to put " her out of countenance."

Lord *W.* Why now, my dear——this is something; if you'd but always treat me with good-humour, you and I should never dispute as long as we live.

Lady *W.* Monster!

Lord *W.* For, you know, I have often told you, that if ever I should be weak enough to wrong you, a gentle complaint and good words would work me to any thing; "when the pride of an insolent reproach "would be but adding fuel to my folly, and make it "flame the higher: but now I see that you are con- "vinced that your suspicions were groundless, and "that you are sensible, if they had not, defiance is "utterly the wrong way to reform me: you shall find "that all this tenderness and temper that you now "treat me with, shall not be thrown away upon me."

Lady *W.* Insolent! provoking devil!

Lord *W.* I am glad we are friends with all my heart; I am, upon my soul, my dear.

Lady *W.* Villain!

Lord *W.* Oh, my dear! I had like to have forgot one thing, and since we are now come to a right understanding, I 'll tell you: if ever you and I should happen to disagree, I beg of you, for your own sake, never give me any hard language; because there is no being certain, but in one of my brutal fits, I may let you cry yourself half blind for it before I forgive you.

Lady *W.* Forgive me! I have a soul as much above the fear of you, as are your injuries below my scorn —I laugh at both.

Lord *W.* Ay, but, my life, I would not have you trust me; for if ever you should accuse me wrongfully, I know my foolish temper so well, that, in my conscience, in pure spite, I believe——I believe—— I believe I should keep a mistress.

ly *W.* My lord, this affectation won 't redress my
es; and however you deceive yourself, in your
stioned power of doing wrong, you 'll find there
rce of justice yet above your strength, a curb of
) check abandoned principles; nor am I yet so
n interest or friends, "jealous of my wrongs,
f their own," but I may find a time and place
ke your proud heart humble for this usage.

d *W.* Death! and hell! dare to insult me with
another thought, these walls shall mark your
ls of liberty: this dismal house becomes your
, debarred of light; and let me see that big-
ied friend, or interest then, than can unlock a
nd's power to keep you——When my wife talks
ly to me, she shall ask my leave first.

ly *W.* Never——Such leave as you took to give
use for 't, I take to tell you of it.

d *W.* "We are upon an equal foot: I won 't
e you so familiar in your accusations." Be
d, and stir me not to use my power: you may
r make me an ill husband than a tame one.

ly *W.* So may you me a wife, my lord: and
is 't binds me more to bear an injury, than you?
: seen you laugh at passive obedience between a
: and people, and in the sense of nature, I can 't
ıy 't is not as ridiculous from a wife to an inju-
husband.

d *W.* Their hazard is at least unequal: a people
e freed by struggling; but when a fettered wife

presumes, the insulted husband's sure to make her chain the shorter.

" Lady *W.* Her mind, at least, is more at liberty; " the ease of giving shame for pain, stands yet in some " degree of pleasure: the wretch that 's basely killed, " falls better satisfied to see his murderer bleed.

" Lord *W.* Nay, now I crave your mercy, madam, " I find I mistook your grievance all this while—It " seems then, to be refused the pleasure of reproaching, " is what you can't bear—and when you are wronged, " to lock up your tongue is the greatest cruelty your " tyrant can impose upon you——If that be the hard- " ship, pray be easy, when you please; in the name of " thunder go on, spare no invectives, but open the " spout of your eloquence, and see with what a calm " connubial resignation, I will both hear and bow to " the chastisement.

" Lady *W.* Poor helpless affectation! This shew of " temper is as much dissembled as your innocence—I " know, in spite of all your hardened thoughts, to " hear your guilt confronted thus, must gall your soul; " patients don 't use to smile while their fresh wounds " are probed, nor criminals to laugh under the smart " of justice.

" Lord *W.* My life, you begin extremely well, and " with abundance of fire, only give me leave to ob- " serve one thing to you, that as you draw towards an " end, don 't forget the principal thing you were " going to say.

" Lady *W.* How poor! how low! how wretched is a

"guilty mind, that stands without a blush the shock "of accusation!

"Lord *W.* Hold, madam, don't mistake me nei- "ther; for I allow you to accuse me of nothing, but "of what we fine gentlemen think is next to nothing "——a little gallantry.

"Lady *W.* Audacious! horrid wretch! and dare "you own the fact?

"Lord *W.* Own it! no, no, if I were guilty, I "would not do that; but I give you leave to suppose "me so, because, by what you say, I fancy it would "ease your heart to reproach me; though methinks "——its very hard that demonstration won't convince "you of my innocence.

"Lady *W.* Demonstration!

"Lord *W.* Demonstration! Ay, demonstration; "for, if I were guilty, pray who could better know it "than myself? and have not I told you with my own "mouth it is no such thing? Pray, what demonstra- "tion can be plainer?"

Lady *W.* I find you are resolved to stand it to the last; but since I know your guilt, I owe myself the justice to resent it. When the weak wife transgresses, the husband's blood has leave to boil; his fury's justified by honour! the wrong admits no measure of amends; his reputation bleeds, and only blood can staunch it. And I must tell you, sir, that in the scales of conscience, the husband's falsehood is an equal injury, and equal too you'll find the wife's resentment; "henceforth be sure you're private in your shame; for

" if I trace you to another proof, expect as little mercy
" for the wretch you doat on, as you yourself would
" shew to the felonious lover.

" *My wrongs through her shall shoot you to the soul,*
" *You shall not find I am an injur'd fool.*" [*Exit.*

Lord *W.* Well said, 'egad, if she could but love with half the fire she can hate, I would not desire to pass my time in better company———Not but between me and myself, our dear consorts have something of a hard time on 't: we are a little apt to take more liberty than we give———but people in power don't care to part with it, whether it be lawful or no; " to bear her insolence is positively intolerable—What " shall I do with her? I know no way of making an " honourable peace, better than sword in hand—E'en " let her pride swell till it burst, and then 't is possi- " ble she may hear reason."

Enter BRUSH.

Brush. Here 's Sir Friendly Moral, my lord.

Lord *W.* Desire him to walk in [*Exit* Brush.] I hold fifty pounds the old gentleman comes to school me about his young kinswoman; if he does, I know he 'll do it handsomely: for give him his due, with all the severity of principles, he is as good-humoured, and as well-bred, as if he had no principles at all.

Enter BRUSH *with* Sir FRIENDLY.

Sir *Fr.* My lord, I am your most humble servant.

Lord *W.* Sir Friendly! this is kind indeed! Chairs there.——Well, how goes the gout, sir?

Sir *Fr.* In troth very untowardly; for I can hardly walk with it—Will your lordship give me leave——

Lord *W.* To stand upon any thing but ceremony.

Enter Lord GEORGE *from the inner room.*

Lord *G.* Nuncle, I am glad to see you.

Sir *Fr.* Hah! Monsieur Brilliant, and in a sober visit after sun-set!

Lord *G.* Oh, dear sir, I am grown a fellow of the most retired conversation in the world.

Sir *Fr.* Your reformation is not of a very long date, I believe; "for, if I don't mistake, I saw you but "yesterday at the Thatched-house, with a napkin "upon your head, at the window, in a very hopeless "company!

"Lord *G.* How! how, nuncle! two men of title, "and a foreign count, hopeless company!

"Sir *Fr.* Most deplorable! Your count's a counter, "and only passes for what he is in his own country; "your men of title are indeed no counterfeits, every "body sees into their worth, Sir Bubble Squander, "and my Lord Lawless: but the sparks I observed "you with, were Done-first the jockey, and Touchum "the gamester; as infamous a fellow as ever broke "the head of a box-keeper.

"Lord *G.* Pshah! People that play keep all com-"pany; but to let you see I had my account in it, I "had a mind to bite Sir Bubble in a horse-match, and "so took these two fellows with me to let him into "the secret.

"Sir *Fr.* A fine instance of our modish morals in-
"deed! To make one's conscience a bawd, to the
"dishonour of biting a wretch of perhaps an hundred
"pounds! What a shame it is the world should not
"call it by its true name, cheating, that men of ho-
"nour might not be guilty of it!

"Lord *G.* Oh, Sir, the name I grant you would
"strangely alter the case; but people of rank and
"power, nuncle, are wiser, and nick-name one an-
"other's infirmities.—Therefore 't is your little cheat,
"you see, that 's sent to Newgate; your great one's only
"turned out of place.

"Sir *Fr.* Nay, 'tis a comfortable world indeed, for
"knaves, fools, fops, cowards, and sharpers.

"Lord *G.* Right! their quality and quantity keep
"them in countenance.

"Sir *Fr.* So that a man may be any one, or all of
"them, and yet appear no monster in most of the
"public places about town.

"Lord *W.* But with submission, Sir Friendly, if I
"meet with a man of figure, that talks agreeably over
"a glass, what in the name of good-nature have I to
"do with his morals?

"Sir *Fr.* 'T is, in my opinion, as dishonest for a
"man of quality to converse with a well-bred rogue,
"as 't were unsafe for a woman of reputation to make
"a companion of an agreeable strumpet. People's
"taste and principles are very justly measured by
"their choice of acquaintance: besides, a man of ho-
"nour owes the discountenance of a villain as a debt

"to his own dignity. How poor a spirit must it "shew in our people of fortune, to let fellows, who, "deserving hanging every other day in their lives, "die at last of sitting up in the best company?" But, my Lord Wronglove, I am afraid I have a pardon to ask; the last time we three were together, did not the old fellow a little overshoot himself? I thought, when we parted, I had been freer in my advice than became me.

Lord *W.* So far from it, that your very manner of speaking makes your most severe reproofs an obligation.

"Sir *Fr.* Nay, I was only concerned for what I had "said to your lordship; as for this spark, I no more "mind his caprice, than I believe he does any thing I "can say to him: and yet the knave has something of "good-humour in him, that makes me I can't help "sometimes throwing away my words upon him. But "give me your hand; in troth, when I was at your "years I had my follies too.

"Lord *G.* Ay! Now you come to us, nuncle, and "I hope you 'll have good nature enough, not to ex-"pect your friends to be wiser than you were.

"Sir *Fr.* Perhaps I don't expect it, but in troth, if "they should be wiser——for my soul I can't see any "harm it would do them: and though I love with all "my heart to see spirit in a young fellow, yet a little "prudence won't poison him: and if a man that sets "out into life, should carry a little general esteem

" with him, as part of his equipage, he 'd make never " the worse figure at the end of his journey.

" Lord *G.* We young fellows that ride post never " mind what figures we make.

" Sir *Fr.* Come, come! let 's not contend for vic- " tory, but truth—I love you both—and would have " all that know you do so too——Don't think be- " cause you pass for men of wit, and modish honour, " that that's all you owe to your condition: fortune " has given you titles to set your actions in a fairer " light, and Nature understanding, to make them " not only just, but generous. Troth it grieves me " to think you can abuse such happiness, and have no " more ambition, or regard to real honour, than the " wretched fine gentlemen in most of our modern " comedies!—Will you forgive me—Upon my faith, I " don't speak thus of you to other people, nor would " I now speak so to you, but to prevent other people's " speaking thus of you to me."

Lord *G.* Nuncle, depend upon't I 'm always pleased to hear you.

" Lord *W.* I take it kindly."

Sir *Fr.* Then first to you, Lord George—What can you think the honest part of the world will say of you, when you have seduced the innocent inclinations of one of the best wives, from perhaps one of the best husbands in the world?—To be plain, I mean my Lady Gentle.—You see, my lord, with all your discretion, your design's no secret.

G. Upon my life, nuncle, if I were half the you think me, I should be ashamed to look in the face.

r. Fie, fie! how useless is the force of under-g, when only age can give us virtue?

W. Come, sir, you see he 's incorrigible, you'll etter success with me, I hope; for to tell you th, I have few pleasures that you can call it vir-me to part with.

r. I am glad to hear it, my lord—I shall be as able as I can; but, since we are in search of must freely tell you, the man that violates him-: sacred honours of his wife's chaste bed (I must n, my lord) ought at least to fear, as she 's the sex the same from her; the injury to her strikes than the head, often to the heart. And then her ation is in nature greater; and injured minds nothing is unjust that 's natural. This ought e a wise man tremble: for in the point of real r, there 's very little difference between being a d, and deserving to be one. And to come a loser to your lordship's case, to see so fine a n as my Lady Wronglove, even in her flower of , slighted for the unblown pleasures of a green-rl; besides, the imprudent part, argues at best and sickly appetite.

W. Sir Friendly, I am almost ashamed to an-ou; "Your reproach, indeed has touched me," for my attempts upon your young kinswoman; cause 't is not fit you should take my word after

my owning so unfair an action, here 's one can bear me witness, that not half an hour before you came in, I had resolved never to pursue her more.

Sir *Fr.* My lord, I came not to reproach you with a wrong to me, but to yourself: had the girl had no relation to me, I still had said the same; not but I now am doubly bound to thank you.

Lord *G.* And now, nuncle, I 'll give you a piece of advice: dispose of the child as soon as you can; rather under match her than not at all. For, if you 'll allow me to know any thing of the mathematics, before she's five weeks older she will be totally unqualified for an ape-leader: this you may as positively depend upon, as that she is of the feminine gender.

Sir *Fr.* I am pretty well acquainted with the ripeness of her inclinations, and have provided for them, unless some such spark as you (now my lord has laid them down) whips up the cudgels in the mean time.

Lord *G.* Not I, upon honour, "depend upon 't; "her person's quite out of my *goût*, nor have I any "more concern about it, than I have to know who "will be the next king of Poland, or who is the true "original inventor of strops for razors."

Lord *W.* Sir Friendly, I own I have been no stranger in other places to the follies you have charged me with; yet I am so far inclined to part with them, that were it possible I could be my own way, and properly, reconciled to my wife, I would not wish a thought of happiness beyond it.

Sir *Fr.* My lord, I know her temper and her spirit.

Lord *W.* Oh, human patience can't bear it!

Sir *Fr.* I warrant you; a wise man will bear a greater weakness from a woman. And, since I find your good-nature is not wholly disobliged, I could wish, for both your sakes, I had your lordship's secret leave to talk with her.

Lord *W.* Umph! Could not it as well be done without my leave, Sir Friendly? I should not care to have her think I made advances——

Sir *Fr.* Oh! I am a friend to both, and will betray neither of you.

Enter BRUSH.

Brush. Sir, there 's a gentleman come out of the city, and stays at your house to speak with you.

Sir *Fr.* I 'll wait on him——My lord, will you excuse me?

Lord *W.* I could rather wish your business would, Sir Friendly.

Sir *Fr.* Upon my word, my lord, 't is urgent. This man brings me money. I am discharging myself of my guardianship to Mrs. Conquest, and my business is now to pay her in the last sum of her fortune.

Lord *G.* What 's the sum total, nuncle, if a man should happen to set a price upon his liberty?

Sir *Fr.* Come, come, the liberties you value, my lord, are not worth keeping. An honest smile from the good-humour of that girl is worth all the sodden favours of your whole seraglio. Will four thousand pounds do any good, my lord?

Lord *G.* Look you, Sir Friendly, marriage is very honourable and wise, and—and—it—it—it 's—it 's an extreme fine thing, no doubt; but I am one of those frank-hearted fellows that had rather see my friends happy that way than myself——My lord, your servant——If you are going home, nuncle, I 'll carry you, for I have business at your house too.

Lord *W.* Who's there? Light out!—Lord George, is your new chariot at the door?

Lord *G.* Yes; and positively the prettiest that ever roll'd in the rear of six horses.

Lord *W.* I have a mind to look at it. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Lord Wronglove's *House. Enter* Lady WRONGLOVE, *and* Mrs. HARTSHORN.

Lady *Wronglove.*

WAS Sir Friendly within?

Mrs. *Harts.* Yes, madam, he gives his humble service, and says he will certainly be at home at eight o'clock, and expect your ladyship's commands.

Lady *W.* Did the fellow give my service to my lady Gentle too, and to Mrs. Conquest?

Mrs. *Harts.* He did not say any thing of it to me, madam.

Lady *W.* What blockhead is it you always find out to neglect my business? Whom did you send?

Mrs. *Harts.* James, madam.

Lady *W.* Call him in; I find I must always give my orders myself.

Mrs. *Harts.* He 's gone to the play to keep your ladyship's places.

Lady *W.* The play! Sure the people are all out of their senses! Why, I shan't go to-day.

Mrs. *Harts.* He said, madam, your ladyship ordered him, right or wrong, to keep places every Saturday.

Lady *W.* Psha!

Mrs. *Harts.* I hope your ladyship is not angry at me, madam.

Lady *W.* No, pr'ythee, I don't know what I say.

Mrs. *Harts.* Ah, poor lady! [*Aside.*

Lady *W.* What is the play to-day?

Mrs. *Harts.* The—the—Husbands, something—— the Careful Husband, I think, madam.

Lady *W.* The Careful! the Careless Husband, you mean sure——though I never saw it.

Mrs *Harts.* Yes, yes, madam—it 's that play that my Lady Wear-breeches hates so, that I saw once, madam; where there 's a lady comes in and catches her husband fast asleep with her own woman, and then takes her handkerchief off her neck, and then goes softly to him——

Lady *W.* And strangles him in his sleep?

Mrs. *Harts.* No, madam.

Lady *W.* Oh, strangles the woman?

Mrs. *Harts.* No, madam, she only lays it gently over his head, for fear he should catch cold, and so

steals out of the room, without so much as offering to wake him.

Lady *W.* Horrid! And what became of the poor-spirited creature?

Mrs. *Harts.* Oh, madam! when the gentleman wakes, and finds that his lady has been there without taking any notice of it to him, he grows so sham'd of his wickedness, and so sensible of her virtues, that he afterwards proves the civilest gentleman, and the best husband in the world to her.

Lady *W.* Foh! Were I an husband, a wife with such a tame, enduring spirit would make me scorn her, or, at best, but sleep at her groveling virtue—Is my lord within?

Mrs. *Harts.* Yes, madam, he's reading in his closet.

Lady *W.* Any thing, the dullest solitude, more pleases him than my company——Hoh! [*Sighing.*

Mrs. *Harts.* Ah, poor lady! it makes me weep to see her grieve at heart so. [*Aside.*

Lady *W.* Go to my lord, and say I desire to speak with him. [*Exit* Hartshorn.] Oh, for a draught of cold indifference, to chill this lukewarm love, that would rebel against my peace, that I may leave without a pang this hardened wretch, and to the rude riots of his gross desire give him up for ever!——He comes; keep down, my swelling heart, and let tame patience speak my wrongs for once; "for wrongs like mine "need not the force nor fire of passion to present them."

Enter Lord WRONGLOVE.

W. I am told, madam, you desire to speak

W. Yes, my lord; and which, perhaps, you 'll ke, to talk with you in temper, too, if you 're er to receive it.

W. While you 're in temper, madam, I shall hink I owe you the respect of keeping mine; n you are not, I shall keep it in respect to my-

W. My lord, I never had occasion to question owing what you ought to do; but you are not you 'll say, to make your inclination a slave to ndefstanding; " and therefore 't is possible won't want arguments to convince me that a 's obliged to bear all faults in a husband that ot in her power to punish.

rd *W.* Proceed.

dy *W.* Now I must tell you, my lord, when one injures me because 't is in their power, I certainly hate them for 't, because that 's in ower.

rd *W.* I am sorry you think it worth your e to make use of so unprofitable a power.

dy *W.* I am sorry I have occasion for it.

rd *W.* Umh—that 's half a question—But n.

dy *W.*" And therefore, since I find the more vour to detect you, the more you persist in

your resolution to use me ill; since my honest resentment, and your actions, have made us a mutual grievance to one another, I see no way in nature to make us mutually just, but by cancelling our obligations. If we agree to part, the uneasy bond of wife or husband no longer lies in force against us. And since I am contented to remit the breaches you have made of the conditions on your part, I suppose you won't think it inconsistent with your reputation to allow me part of the fortune I brought you, as a separate maintenance.

Lord *W.* When you and I part, madam, you shall leave none of your fortune behind you. But should I now yield to your proposal, the world might think I owned the breaches you accuse me of, and then 't were only parting to indulge your pride. But if the sincere sorrow of your humble heart can find a way to make it as consistent with my reputation as my private peace, I 'll sign to your relief this moment.

Lady *W.* Your reputation! No, my lord, that's your business to secure; I 've taken care to let my actions justify my own. If you have been remiss, the fault 's not mine to answer. I am glad at least to see you own where it is your weakness lies.

Lord *W.* To bear such insults from a wife, is not perhaps my least weakness. Nay, I 've another too, which I might own with equal blushing: a tame forgiving pity of your unfortunate temper, that pauses yet to take the advantage of your distraction to undo you.

Lady *W.* Horrid! Insolent assertion, to do me injury, and call my innocent endeavours at redress, distraction.

Lord *W.* Innocent! Away! "You take the rudest, "fiercest, falsest means for reparation, if you had a "wrong.

"Lady *W.* If I had! Insupportable! To be out-"faced that my own eyes deceive me!

"Lord *W.*" Death and confusion!——Suppose your wrongs were true——think what they are——speak 'em with a modest tongue, and blush at all this redness of resentment.

Lady *W.* Nay, now, my lord, we are past all argument.

"Lord *W.* 'Tis fit we should be so. The subject "ought to be below your thoughts. Don't misuse "your pride, till I am taught to think you 've none. "Death! I 've known the spirit of a strumpet in the "misfortunes of her slighted love, shew more than "you; who, though her heart was bleeding with the "inward pain, yet to her lover's face took pride and "ease to seem concernless at his falsehood.

"Lady *W.* My lord, your having a better opinion "of such creatures than your wife, is no new thing "to me: but I must tell you, I have not deserved "your vile comparison, nor shall I ever buy an hus-"band's inclination, by being like the horrid things "you doat on."

Lord *W.* Come, since you are incorrigible, I 'll give your pride the vain relief you ask for. "Your

" temper is at last intolerable, and now 't is mutual " ease to part with you. Yet to let you see 't is not " in the power of all your follies to provoke me to an " injustice, I will not trust your wishes with your " own discretion;" but if you have a friend that 's not an enemy to me, whose honesty and sense you dare depend on, let him be umpire of the conditions of what 's proper both of us should yield to when we part, and here 's my hand, my word, my honour, I 'll sign them on demand.

Lady *W.* Keep but your word in this, my lord, and I have henceforth no injuries to reproach you with.

Lord *W.* If in the least article I shrink from it, conclude me then the mean, the servile wretch, you 'd make me.

Lady. *W.* I 'd make you just, my lord; if that 's my fault, I never shall repent it.

Lord *W.* We are now no longer our own judges, madam, name the person you appeal to.

Lady *W.* Oh, my lord, you can't be more in haste than I am. Sir Friendly Moral; and I think you can have no objection to his integrity. I appeal to him.

Lord *W.* The man in the world I would have chose myself; and if you please, madam, I 'll wait upon you to him immediately.

Lady *W.* No, my lord, I think it won't be unseasonable if I speak with him alone, first.

Lord *W.* With all my heart; in half an hour then I 'll follow you.

Lady *W.* My lord, you need not affect this indifference; I have provocations enough without it—I 'll go, depend on 't.

Lord *W.* I thought you had been gone, madam—[*She passes hastily by him.*] How now!

Enter BRUSH, *who whispers* Lord WRONGLOVE.

Brush. Sir Friendly Moral desires to speak with your lordship; he stays in the next room, and begs my lady may not know he 's here.

Lady *W.* [*Turning.*] What can that whisper mean? But I have done with jealousy.

Lord *W.* When your lady's gone out, desire him to walk in. [*Exit* Brush.] In half an hour, as I told you, I 'll positively be with you.

Lady *W.* Oh, my lord, I sha'n't stay to interrupt your privacies. [*Exit.*

Lord *W.* How unfortunate must this woman's temper be, when even this affectation of indifference is the greatest proof I ever received of her inclination!—"What can this come to?—By Sir Friendly's being "here, I fancy she has been disclosing her grievances "already; and when she has made the very worst of "it, I am mistaken if his temper and understanding "won't convince her, that 'tis below the pride and "prudence of a wife to take so violent a notice of it "——But here he comes."

Enter Sir FRIENDLY MORAL.

Sir Friendly, your most humble servant. Come, we are

alone, I guess your business—my wife has been talking with you.

Sir *Fr.* No, my lord; and unless you give me your word to be secret, I dare not tell my business.

Lord *W.* Upon my honour.

Sir *F.* Then there, my lord, I just now received that letter from her.

Lord *W.* [*Reads.*] 'At last I find there's no way of being easy in my life, but parting for ever with my lord; and I would willingly do it in such a manner as might least blame me to the world. Your friendship to both our families will, I am sure, engage you to advise me in the safest method: therefore I beg you 'll be at home some time this evening, that I may speak with you; for life, as it is, is insupportable.

I am, sir, &c.'

Well, Sir Friendly, then I can tell you half your trouble is over; for we have agreed to part already, and both have chosen you umpire of the conditions.

Sir *Fr.* How, my lord! could passion be so far your master too?

Lord *W.* Why, faith, Sir Friendly, patience could endure it no longer. 'T was her own proposal, and she found the way at last to provoke me to take her at her word.

Sir *Fr.* Her word! fie, fie! Because she 'd lame her reputation to cripple yours, shall you revenge her folly on yourself? Come, come, your understanding ought to have more compassion for the misfortunes of a weak woman's temper.

" Lord *W.* Oh, she 's implacable!

" Sir *F.* That quality punishes itself, my lord; and " since the provocation 's your's, it might sometimes " be pardoned." Do but imagine how it must gall the heart of a woman of spirit, to see the loose coquettes of her acquaintance smile at the modish husband's sleeping in a separate bed from her.

Lord *W.* Humph!—there 's something in what you say, I own—not but you 'll laugh at me, should I tell you the true and honest occasion of it.

Sir *Fr.* Not if it be true and honest, my lord.

Lord *W.* Upon my faith, it was not the least distaste of her person, but her being downright an intolerable bed-fellow.

Sir *Fr.* How do you mean?

Lord *W.* I could never sleep with her. For though she hates late hours, yet when she has seen me gape for bed, like a waiter at the Groom-Porter's in a morning, she would still reserve to herself the tedious decorum of being first solicited for her company; so that she usually contrived to let me be three quarters asleep before she would do me the honour to disturb me. Then, besides this, I was seldom less than two nights in four, but in the very middle of my first comfortable nap, I was awakened with the alarm of tingle tingle, for a quarter of an hour together, that you 'd swear she wanted a doctor or a midwife; and by-and-by down comes Mademoiselle, with a single underpetticoat in one hand, and rubbing her eyes with t' other; and then, after about half an hour's weighty

arguments on both sides, poor Mademoiselle is guilty of not having pulled the sheet smooth at her feet, by which unpardonable neglect, her ladyship's little toe had lain at least two hours on the rack of a wrinkle, that had almost put her into a fever. This, when I civilly complained of, she said she must either be easy in bed, or go out of it. I told her that was exactly my case; so I very fairly stepped into the next room, where I have ever since slept most profoundly, without so much as once dreaming of her.

Sir *Fr.* An unfortunate circumstance truly! But I see a little matter, my lord, will part people that don't care for company.

Lord *W.* But, Sir Friendly, (not to trouble you with a long particular of the provocations I had from her temper to run a roguing at first) suppose I have played the fool, is the fault unpardonable? Is a wife's reputation like an husband's, mean, or infamous, because she overlooks the folly?

Sir *Fr.* No. But did you, my lord, ever give her any signs of repentance?

Lord *W.* As far as I have thought the nature of the crime required. "I've often received her moderate "reproaches with a smile and raillery; given her "leave to guess, in hopes her understanding would "have smiled again, and pardoned it."

Sir *Fr.* And what effect had that?

Lord *W.* Oh, none in nature!—"For, sir, her "pride has possessed her with so horrid an idea of "the crime, that my making slight on't but the more

" incenses her; and when once her passion takes the " liberty of her tongue to me, I neither spare autho- " rity nor ill-nature to provoke or silence her. This " generally is our course of conversation;" and for aught I see, if we should not agree upon parting, we are in as fair a way of heartily plaguing one another for life, as e'er a comfortable couple in Europe.

Sir *Fr.* My lord, the thought's too melancholy to jest upon.

Lord *W.* Why, faith, I have so far a concern for her, that could any means of an accommodation be found that were not unfit for a husband to submit to, I should not yet refuse to come into it.

Sir *Fr.* Spoken like a man, my lord!—How far the fault 's in you I partly see: and when I have made the same enquiry into my lady's grief, I doubt not then I shall be better able to advise.

Lord *W.* You've now an opportunity, for she 's gone this very minute to my Lady Gentle's, to speak with you.

Sir *Fr.* 'T were best to lose no time then, my lord: I'll take my leave———Nay, no ceremony——

Lord *W.* No, I 'm going part of your way——Upon my word. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Changes to Lady Gentle's *House.* *Enter* Lady GENTLE *reading a letter, and* Mrs. CONQUEST.

Mrs. *Con.* I hope Sir William 's well, madam.

Lady *Gent.* Yes, very well, my dear, and desires his *baisemains* to your ladyship.

Mrs. *Con.* Does he say any thing of coming to town?

Lady *Gent.* No, nothing yet.

Mrs. *Con.* No!—pray, madam, do n't you think his good worship begins to be a little fonder of fox-hunting than you could wish he were?

Lady *Gent.* I am always pleased while he 's diverted —If you saw his letters to me, you would not think I had any reason to complain.

Mrs. *Con.* Nay, the world owns your ladyship has the perfect secret of making a good husband.

Lady *Gent.* Believe me, child, the matter 's not so difficult as people would have it. If you but knew what trifles in the compliance of a wife's temper sooth a man to fondness, you'd admire to what childish obstinacy so many women owe their uneasiness.

Enter Miss NOTABLE, *crying.*

Miss *Not.* Oh, oh!

Lady *Gent.* How now! what 's the matter, my dear?

Miss *Not.* Oh, oh! madam, madam!

Mrs. *Con.* Bless me what ails the child?

Miss *Not.* I have been so abused, so affronted!

ly *Gent.* Abused! By whom, my dear?

ss *Not.* That monster of men, my Lord George ant.

s. *Con.* My Lord George!

ss *Not.* Oh, I can't speak for passion!

ly *Gent.* I 'm amaz'd! What has he done, child?

ss *Not.* The most provoking, impudent thing ver was offered to a young creature, sure.— oh!

s. *Con.* [*Aside.*] This must be some strange , indeed; for if I don't mistake, her young hip thinks herself old enough for most sorts of dence that a man can offer her.

dy *Gent.* Has he offered any love, or rudeness to

ss *Not.* Oh, worse, worse, a thousand times!

s. *Con.* Worse! What can that be, child?—— is it be, that he has not made love to her? [*Aside.*

ss *Not.* Oh, madam! 'tis not myself alone, but ladyship and Mrs. Conquest too that are af- ed.

s. *Con.* Am I in? But it 's no novelty to me. I so far the better of both of you, I am used to his dence, and know how to bear it.

dy *Gent.* I am amazed! Pray let 's hear, child.

ss *Not.* Oh, I could tear his flesh for having such ught of me!

dy *Gent.* What thought, my dear?

ss *Not.* Oh, madam! could any thing but the

greatest villain upon earth think to make me a procuress?

Lady *Gent.* Child! you startle me!

Miss *Not.* Or any mortal, but from a most profligate principle of the most provoking vanity, nourish but the least living hope against your ladyship's virtue?

Lady *Gent.* How, child!

Miss *Not.* Or any monster, but the most ungrateful, most audacious of mankind, propose too, that I should discover his odious inclinations to your ladyship, before the face of one who innocently loves him? Oh, I am past patience!——I think I do it bravely. [*Aside.*

[*Walks in disorder.*

Lady *Gent.* I'm all confusion!

Mrs. *Con.* If this girl's passion is not all an air, and her own contrivance, then will I be bound to endure the success of it. [*Aside.*

Lady *Gent.* His inclination! and to me! and yet proposed that you should discover it before Mrs. Conquest too! To glory in such insolence!—This seems a contradiction.

Miss *Not.* Or else, said he 'twill never be believed; for having the idle reputation of liking one, I am obliged that both should know it, that she I really love may see I'm wholly free from my former passion.

Mrs. *Con.* This lie must be his own, by the extremity of its impudence. [*Aside.*

Lady *Gent.* But when he used my name, child, why were you not shocked at first? Why did not you leave him to tell his idle story to the world?

Miss *Not.* Oh, madam! that was what betrayed me into hearing him: for when he first began he named no names; that he reserved till last, till he had told me all, to clinch the secret with.

Lady *Gent.* But, pray, child, how did he begin it? —What was his manner of first attempting you?

Mrs. *Con.* Her ladyship grows a little inquisitive, methinks. [*Aside.*

Miss *Not.* Oh, with all the subtle softness that ever humble love inspired!—Then, of a sudden, rousing from his fear, he gave himself such an animated air of confidence, "threw back his wig," and cried aloud,

Why should she asham'd or angry be,
To be belov'd by me?

Mrs. *Con.* What do you think of his modesty now, madam?

Lady *Gent.* I am amazed, indeed!

Miss *Not.* Then he turned to me, pressed me by the hand, and, kneeling, begged my friendship, and threw into my lap such untold heaps of gold, forced upon my finger too a sparkling diamond, I thought must beggar him to purchase. But when I heard him close his impudent story with offering me a letter to give your ladyship while Mrs. Conquest was by, I started up, and told him, Yes, my lord, I'll do your errand, but without your letter, in another manner than your infamous principles have proposed it; my lady shall know your passion, but know it as I do, to avoid, to loath, and scorn you for such a villanous thought. While I was saying this, I threw his filthy

gold upon the floor, his letter into the fire, his diamond out of the window, and left him to gather them up as he pleased, without expecting an answer.

Lady *Gent.* Sure 't is impossible a man should wear a face that could so steadfastly belie his heart.

Miss *Not.* So I was resolved to tell your ladyship ——Besides, I thought it proper Mrs. Conquest should know his brutality to her too.

Mrs. *Con.* Oh, I am mightily obliged to you, my dear; but I knew him before.

Miss *Not.* Ha! how affectedly indifferent the vain thing is! [*Aside.*

Lady *Gent.* My dear, I 'm at a loss how far to doubt, or to believe this folly of him. Pray, advise me. [*To* Mrs. Conquest.

Mrs. *Con.* If your ladyship would take my opinion, I 'd be entirely easy; I 'd neither doubt or believe any thing of the matter, till I had it confirmed from his own behaviour.

Miss *Not.* I can't bear this. She sha'n't be so easy —I 'll tell her the whole truth of his addressing to me, but I 'll humble her. [*Aside.*

Lady *Gent.* Now, you know he was to be here with other company at cards to-night; but if you 'll do me the favour to sit with me, I 'll keep my chamber, say I 'm indisposed, and see no company at all. What think you?

Mrs. *Con.* I think it won't be worth that trouble, madam,

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Madam, the company's come.

Lady *Gent.* Is my Lord George there?

Serv. Yes, madam.

Lady *Gent.* What shall we do now?

Mrs. *Con.* By all means go and receive him among the rest, as you used to do, and take no notice of any thing. I'll wait upon your ladyship in two minutes.

Lady *Gent.* If you don't, I shall certainly betray myself; I'll come and fetch you. [*Exit.*

Mrs. *Con.* As you please, madam. I have observed a thoughtful smile upon this girl's face, that makes me fancy her secret is but half out yet. If I guess right I'll e'en pique her little pride till she tells me, for I know the chit does not care for me. [*Aside.*

Miss *Not.* Oh! Mrs. Vanity's a little upon the humdrum at last, I see; I'll make her sob before I have done with her. [*Aside*] Mrs. Conquest, you seem a little concerned about this matter; now, if I were you, I'd take no manner of notice of it, he should not have the pride to think 't was in his power to give me a moment's uneasiness,

Mrs. *Con.* My dear, you advise me very well; but upon my word, I am not uneasy.

Miss *Not.* Pooh! that's such a jest! as if you did not love my Lord George.

Mrs. *Con.* Did he ever tell you I did?

Miss *Not.* Tell me!——No; but one sees that well enough.

Mrs. *Con.* Why then, if I do love him, child, you may depend upon't, 'tis only from the assurances I have of his loving me only.

Miss *Not.* But since you see (as the world will too in a little time) how false these assurances are, had not you better seem to leave him, than lie under the scandal of his leaving you?

Mrs. *Con.* No, child; I 'll still keep up my pretensions, if it be only to hinder other vain creatures from coming into hopes of him: for I know, were I once to own myself disengaged, then every impertinent coquet in town would be giving airs to him.

Miss *Not.* Was ever any thing so stupidly vain? ——[*Aside.*]——Lard! madam, you have a mighty opinion of your perfections sure, to think it impossible a man can be false to you: some women would ha' been a-top of the house by this time, if they had only heard of their lover's common civility to another. You are strangely happy sure, when his owning a passion to your friend, before your face, can't make you uneasy; heh! heh!

Mrs. *Con.* Methinks, child, my want of jealousy from what you've said, gives you a little uneasiness. I should be loth to think his idle way of raillery had taught you to think of love so soon.

Miss *Not.* So soon! I suppose, madam, if I had the forwardness of your ladyship's inclination, I might produce as good proofs of his passion for me, as you can of his constancy to you.

Mrs. *Con.* So, she's stirred. I must have the rest on't. [*Aside.*] His passion to thee, love! that were

impossible. Have a passion for any thing so incapable to conceive it! Why, love's a thing you won't be fit to think of these two years.

Miss *Not.* Not think of it! I'd have you know, madam, there are men in the world that think me as fit for a lover as your ladyship.

Mrs. *Con.* So, now its coming. [*Aside.*

Miss *Not.* And however unfit you think me, madam, I'd have you, next time any man's idle raillery flatters you into a passion for him, don't let me know it; I say, don't let me know it, for fear my unfitness should deceive your vanity, by taking him from you. Not think of it! I shall live to see you burst with envy, madam. Do you observe me! Burst! burst! Not think of it!

Mrs. *Con.* Nay, now I am convinced. This passion, I dare swear, is real. He has certainly said some civil thing, before he was aware—But for what you said of him just now, to my Lady Gentle, my pretty one——

Miss *Not.* Pretty one! Pray, madam—Though I'm sorry I can't say the same of your ladyship.

Mrs. *Con.* I say, all your late sobbing, and pretending to throw gold about the room, and diamonds out of the window, and all that stuff, my honey, I am now confirmed was all, from first to last, the pretty fiction of thy own little pride and jealousy, only to have the ease of giving me pain, from his supposed forsaking me.

Miss *Not.* Ha, ha, ha! I am glad to see your vanity so swelled, madam; but since I find it is your disease,

I'll be your friend for once, and work your cure by bursting it. Know then you have guessed a truth that has undone you: the part I've acted of his pretended passion to another, was, as you said indeed a fiction all, and only played to give my pride the diversion of his owning to your face, how little he regards you. But know the fatal face to which you owe your ruin, was not my Lady Gentle's, that was my own invention, but mine; not her, nor you, but me, and me alone he loves.——These poor unfit features have seduced him from you. And now let all the world, that sees how barbarously your vanity, or mine, has mistaken idle raillery for love, judge who's most fit to think of it. [*Exit.*

Mrs. *Con.* Now the mystery's unfolded. Oh! this subtle devil! how artfully has he fooled this forward girl to his assistance. Well, there's something in the barefaced excess of his assurance that makes me smile: I'm loth to say he's impudent, but he has an undaunted modesty that's certain, and for that very one quality 'twill be worth my while not to trust him even with my Lady Gentle. Oh, sir——

Enter Sir FRIENDLY MORAL.

Sir *Fr.* So, child, how stand affairs now? Any fresh discovery?

Mrs. *Con.* Only a trifling confirmation or two, sir, of what we suspected before. Therefore what we do must be done quickly. Have you considered what I proposed, sir?

Sir *Fr.* In troth, 't is a wild thought, but you have a wild spark to deal with, and for ought I know, his own snares may be likeliest t hold him. Only take this general caution with you, that the warmth of your understanding don't carry you into any action, that the discretion of your sex can't answer.

Mrs. *Con.* Fear not, sir, I know my man, and know myself.

Sir *Fr.* Then here 's your letter writ, and sealed as you directed.

Mrs. *Con.* And here comes my lady; 't will be now a fit occasion to make use of it.

Sir *Fr.* I 'll leave you then.

Mrs. *Con.* When I have done with her, sir, I would consult you farther.

Sir *Fr.* I 'll expect you in my chamber.

[*Exit* Sir Friendly.

Enter Lady GENTLE.

Lady *Gent.* Oh, child, I'm glad I have found you.

Mrs. *Con.* What 's the matter, madam?

Lady *Gent.* I think I was never more provoked in my life.

Mrs. *Con.* Any thing from Lord George?

Lady *Gent.* Yes—something that makes me shudder at the thought.

Mrs. *Con.* Bless me!

Lady *G.* Something so grossly insolent in the over-respectfulness of his behaviour, such an affected awe when he but speaks to me, something that shews

within his heart so vain, so arrogant a hope! it m provokes me than all the awkward follies of a ba faced impudence: and since I find he secretly p sumes upon my knowing his odious secret, 't will therefore but equal justice to myself and you, to cr his idle hopes at once: for not to check, is to enc rage them: and when once a woman's known to followed, let her virtue be never so famed, or fortifi the good-natured town always concludes the lover s cessful.

Mrs. *Con.* You did not seem to understand his l haviour?

Lady *Gent.* I can't tell whether he understood me no; but I could not help saying in a very grave m ner, that whatever strait I put myself to, his thousa pounds should certainly be paid him next week.

Mrs. *Con.* And how did he take it?

Lady *Gent.* Oh! he is not to be put out of coun nance, that I see, for he pressed me with a world easy civility, not to give myself the least concern; if I pleased, he would immediately give me a very f chance to pay him, without ever drawing a line for

Mrs. *Con.* A fair chance! What was it?

Lady *Gent.* Why he offered me indeed at picq such odds, as I am sure he is not able to give me; Count Tailly, who stood by, thought it so consi rable an advantage, that he begged he might go halves, or what part of the money I pleased.

Mrs. *Con.* Well said, Count——This may come something——She must play with him——for p

actively there's no other way of seeing a quick end to his hopes, or mine [*Aside.*

Lady *Gent.* The extravagance of his offer I confess, surprised me; so I only told him, I 'd consider on't, and came to you for advice.

Mrs. *Con.* Then certainly, madam, take him at his word; and since you know his dishonest end, in offering such an advantage, e'en make use on't, and let his very baseness punish itself.

Lady *Gent.* As how?

Mrs. *Con.* Look you; the best way to disappoint his hopes, is first to raise 'em. Go to him this minute —Call for cards—and put on all the coquet airs imaginable: smile at his respect, and glance him out of his affected modesty. By this means you will certainly encourage his vanity, not only to the gallantry of letting you win your money again, but more than probably, of losing his own to you.

Lady *Gent.* I vow you tempt me strangely—I boggle at nothing, but those airs you speak of, I shall do it so awkwardly—

Mrs. *Con.* Pooh! I warrant you, trust to nature; it's nothing; one cannot set one's hair in a glass without 'em. If it were not a sure card, you can't think I 'd advise you to play it, for my own sake.

Lady *Gent.* That, indeed, leaves me nothing to say. Well, upon your encouragement, I will venture, and the very moment I get home the sum I am out to him, I 'll throw up my cards, and fairly tell him, I know when 'tis time to give over.

Mrs. *Con.* Admirable!

Lady *Gent.* Nay, and because I don't think I owe him the regard of declaring it myself, I 'll go down into Sussex to-morrow morning, and leave you, if you think fit, to tell him the occasion.

Mrs. *Con.* No, madam, to let your ladyship see I think every thing is entirely safe under your discretion, as my own, I am resolved to go out of town this moment.

Lady *Gent.* What do you mean?

Mrs. *Con.* I have received a letter here from my brother Sir John, my twin-brother, madam, whom I have not seen these nine years; he arrived but last night from Italy, to take possession of his estate; he 's now at his house in Essex, and a little indisposed after his voyage: he has sent his coach, and begs, if possible, I would be with him to-night.

Lady *Gent.* To-night! impossible! Go as early in the morning, child, as you please.

Mrs. *Con.* No, dear madam, pardon me, the moon shines, and I had rather defer my sleep, than break it.

Lady *Gent.* Well, my dear, since you won't be persuaded, I wish you a good journey. I shall see you before you go.

Mrs. *Con.* I have just a moment's business with Sir Friendly, and then I 'll wait upon your ladyship.

[*Exit* Lady Gentle.

Well, there she goes——how she will come off I can't tell. The good woman, I dare swear, is truly innocent in her intentions but good looking after, I fancy,

can do her no injury: for virtue, though she's of a noble spirit, and a great conqueror, 'tis true; yet, as she's stout, alas! we know she's merciful, and when sly humility and nature kneel hopeless to her unquestioned power, they look so pitiful, speak in such a gentle tone, and sigh their griefs with such submission, that cruel virtue loses all its anger for compassion ——compassion kindles hope, hope arms assurance, and then——though virtue may have courage enough to give a stout knock with her heel, for somebody to come in——still, I say, if somebody should come in —'twould be ungrateful in any woman alive not to allow, that good attendance sometimes may do her virtue considerable service [*Exit.*

ACT V. SCENE I.

Continues. *Enter* Lord GEORGE *and* Miss NOTABLE.

Miss Notable.

So, when I found that would not take down her vanity, I e'en told her the whole truth of the matter, that it was not my Lady Gentle, but her humble servant was her rival.

Lord *G.* Well said! What did Mrs. Conquest say upon that?

Miss *Not.* She did not say much, but the poor soul 's gone out of town upon 't.

Lord *G.* Out of town at this time of night! What do you mean?

Miss *Not.* Just as I say, sir. Her brother, it seems, is come from travel, so the fullness of her stomach laid hold on that occasion, and she pretends she's gone to meet him. Now what I expect from you is this; since I see nothing but demonstration will heartily humble her ladyship, you shall confess all I told her of your addressing to me, under your own hand, in a billet to me, which I'll inclose in a stinging letter from myself to her, and send it immediately.

Lord *G.* So, so, I am like to be drawn into a fine business here. The jest must not go so far neither.—The child has a strange vivacity in her good-nature. [*Aside.*

Miss *Not.* You pause upon 't———

Lord *G.* Well, madam, to let you see I scorn to profess more than I'll stand to, do you draw up the letter to your mind, I'll copy it, and—and—and—put the change upon you. [*Aside.*

Miss *Not.* Ay, now you say something; I'll about it immediately.

Lord *G.* Do so, I'll stay here till you have done it. [*Exit Miss* Not.

Who says I am not a provident lover? For now by that time my harvest of Lady Gentle is over, the early inclination I have sown in this girl will be just ripe and ready for the sickle. "A true woman's man "should breed his mistresses, as an old what-dye-"call-um does young girls in a play-house, one under

" another, that he may have always something fit for " the desire of several persons of quality." But here comes my Lady Gentle———Assurance, stand fast, and do n't let the insolent awe of a fine woman's virtue look thee out of countenance.

Enter Lady GENTLE.

Lady *Gent.* Come, come, my lord, where do you run? the cards wait for you.

Lord *G.* I did not know your ladyship had resolved to do me the honour of accepting the match I proposed you.

Lady *Gent.* Oh, your servant, grave sir—you have a mind to be off on 't, I suppose——but as mere a country girl as you think me, you 'll find I am enough in the mode not to refuse a good offer, whether I deserve it or no.

Lord *G.* Coquet by all that 's lovely! [*Aside.*]—I must confess, madam, I should be glad to see your ladyship a little better reconciled to the diversions in fashion.

Lady *Gent.* And if I have any skill in faces, whatever solemn airs you give yourself, nobody is more a private friend to them than your lordship.

Lord *G.* I can't disown a secret tenderness for every thing that ought to move the heart; but reputation should be always sacred; and he that does not take some care of his own, can never hope to be much trusted with other people's: for were a woman of condition generously to make that trust, what conse-

quence upon earth could be more terrible to her, than the folly or baseness of her lover's exposing the secret?

Lady *Gent.* Very modish morals, upon my word; so that a prudent regard to her reputation is all the virtue you think a woman has occasion for——Fie, fie, I 'll swear, my lord, I took you for quite another man.

Lord *G.* I never was deceived in your ladyship, for I always took you for a woman of the first understanding.

Lady *Gent.* Are you not a wicked creature? How can you have the assurance to think any woman that knows you, will become civil to you?

Lord *G.* I do think the most impudent thing a man can offer to a woman, is to ask the least favour of her before he has done something to deserve it; and so, if you please, madam, we 'll e'en sit down to picquet, and make an end of our argument afterwards.

Lady *Gent.* How blind is vanity! that this wretch can't see I fool him all this while! [*Aside.*] Well, my lord, for once I won't baulk your gallantry.

Enter Sir FRIENDLY MORAL.

Come, Sir Friendly, my lord and I are going to picquet; have you a mind to look on a little?

Sir *Fr.* Troth, madam, I have often looked on, and have as often wondered, to see two very good friends sit fairly down, and in cool blood, agree to wish one another heartily inconvenienced in their fortune.

Lady *Gent.* Oh fie! nuncle, that 's driving the consequence too far.

" Sir *Fr.* Not a jot. And 'tis amazing, that so " many good families should daily encourage a diver- " sion, whose utmost pleasure is founded upon ava- " rice and ill-nature; for those are always the secret " principles of deep play."

Re-enter Miss NOTABLE, *and winks at* Lord GEORGE.

Lord *G.* I 'll wait upon your ladyship in a moment. [*Exit.*

Lady *Gent.* I don't know, play is a diversion that always keeps the spirits awake, methinks, whether one wins or losses.

Sir *Fr.* I have very little to say against a moderate use of it—but we grow serious. Pray, madam, is my Lady Wronglove in the next room?

Lady *Gent.* I left her there, she was enquiring for you——Here she is.

Enter Lady WRONGLOVE.

Well, madam, what are they doing within?

Lady *W.* There 's like to be no bank, I find, they are all broke into ombre and picquet.

Lady *Gent.* Your ladyship is not for play then?

Lady *W.* Not yet, madam: I have a word or two with Sir Friendly, and I 'll endeavour to wait on your ladyship.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Madam, here 's Sir John Conquest just come

to town, he enquires for your ladyship, or Sir Friendly Moral.

Lady *Gent.* Sir John! What a mistake has poor Mrs. Conquest made now? She went but an hour ago to meet him.

Sir *Fr.* Will your ladyship give me leave to wait on him.

Lady *Gent.* If you please to give yourself that trouble, Sir Friendly. Pray desire him to walk in.

[*Exit Sir* Friendly.

Is my Lord Wronglove come, madam?

Lady *W.* He said he would be here; but you must not expect him the more for that.

Lady *Gent.* He does not much stand upon forms, indeed; but he 's extremely good-humour'd when one has him.

" Lady *W.* How can people taste good-humour " where there 's no principle?

" Lady *Gent.* And what dull company would the " strictest principle be without good-humour?

" Lady *W.* And yet the best temper 's but a cheat " without them.

" Lady *Gent.* He must be a man indeed that lives " without a fault; but there are some, that 't is al- " ways a woman's interest to overlook in a husband; " our frowns may govern lovers, but husbands must " be smiled on.

" Lady *W.* I should despise the man that must be " flattered to be just.

" Lady *Gent.* Alas! the price is very little, and let

" me tell you, madam, the man that 's just, is not to " be despised.

" Lady *W.* He that lives in professed contempt of " obligations, can never be beloved—'t is better to " release them; you 'll shortly see me easy.

" Lady *Gent.* I shall ever wish you so."

Enter Sir FRIENDLY MORAL, *with* Mrs. CONQUEST, *in man's habit.*

Sir *Fr.* This, sir, is my Lady Gentle. [*They salute.*

Lady *Gent.* You are welcome to England, sir.

Enter Lord GEORGE, *who seeing* Mrs. CONQUEST, *whispers* Sir FRIENDLY.

Mrs. *Con.* I hope your ladyship will excuse my unseasonable visit, but I rather chose to be troublesome than slow in the acknowledgements I owe to your ladyship for the many favours to my sister.

Lady *Gent.* Mrs. Conquest and her friends are always welcome to me. My Lady Wronglove, pray know Sir John.

Sir *Fr.* My Lord George, and Sir John, will you give me leave to recommend a friendship between you?

Lord *G.* Sir, I shall be proud to embrace it.

Mrs. *Con.* 'T will be a charity in a man of your lordship's figure to give a raw young fellow a little countenance at his first arrival.

Lord *G.* Your appearance, sir, I am confident will never want a friendship among the men of taste, or the ladies.

" Lady *W.* But still it has not cured the wrong.

" Sir *Fr.* Then certainly 't was wrong to use it.

" Lady *W.* I've been reduced to use it: nor could " I bear the loose, malicious fleerings of the world, " without a just resentment upon him.

" Sir *Fr.* Nor would I have you bear it—no;—but " disappoint their empty fashionable malice, close up " this unprofitable breach, 'tis still within your " power, and fix him yet more firmly yours."

Lady *W.* Alas, 't is now too late! We have agreed on other terms: he too, at last, is willing we should part.

Sir *Fr.* Bury that thought: come, come, there 's yet a gentler cure, could you suppress your temper to go through it: this rash and fruitless struggling with a broken limb gives you but more outrageous pain, inflames the wound, and brings your very life of peace in danger: think what a glorious conquest it would be, even in the face of the censorious and insulting world, to tame this wanderer, whose frail inconsistency has sought a vain and false belief abroad: to lure him home with soft affection, to lull him into blushes, peace, and envied happiness: one word, one tender look secures your triumph: is there no virtue think you in remission? Nothing persuasive in the reproach of patient love?

Lady *W.* I see to what your friendship would persuade me; but " were it possible my flattered hopes " could lose the memory of my wrongs for ever— " Say I could this moment hush my woman's pride to

" all the tenderness of soft affection, could sigh, could " weep, and yearn for reconcilement! Where could " a wretch, unheeded in her wrongs like me, find " shelter? Where is the friendly bosom would receive " me?" How can I hope for comfort from that breast that now I fear is hardened to my undoing?

Sir *Fr.* Cherish that soft'ning thought, and all may yet be well. Oh! there's a meritable goodness in those fears that cannot fail to conquer. Do not suppose, I can be partial to his errors, and not a friend to your complaints. Resentment can but at best revenge, but never redress 'em. Repose 'em with a friend for once, and be assur'd, as of my honesty, I 'll make you no dishonourable peace.

Lady *W.* I don't doubt of your sincere endeavours. But who can answer for another's morals? Think how much more miserable you make me, should he insult upon my patience.

Sir *Fr.* By that sincerity you trust in, I know him of a softer nature, friendly, generous, and tender; only to opposition, obstinately cool; to gentleness, submissive as a lover.

Lady *W.* Do what you will with me.

[*Sits down weeping.*

Sir *Fr.* He comes! be comforted! Depend upon my friendship.

Enter Lord WRONGLOVE.

My lord, I grieve to see you here on this occasion.

Lord *W.* I'm not myself transported at it,
Friendly—I come—t' obey my summons.

Sir *Fr.* How easily we pay obedience to our wisl
Was it well done, my lord, to work the weaknes
a woman to ask for what you knew was her undoi
A mind, which your unkindness had distemper'd,
serv'd a tenderer care, than reaching a corrosive f
cordial. Your judgment could not but foresee,
resolution of a love-sick wife must stagger in
shock of separation.

Lord *W.* Ha! [*Lady* Wronglove *weep*

Sir *Fr.* Look there; and while these soft'ning t
reproach you, think on the long-watch'd, rest
hours, she already has endur'd from your misdoi
nor could you blame her, if in the torturing pain
thought her only help was cutting off the infe
limb: but you! you to hold the horrid knife prepa
while your hard heart was conscious of a gen
cure, was cruelty beyond a humane nature.

Lord *W.* Mistake me not: I need not these
proaches to be just. I never sought this separati
never wish'd it; and when it can be prov'd unkin
me to accept it, my ruin should as soon be welco
And though perhaps my negligence of temper r
have stood the frowns of love unmov'd, yet I can
no guard within, that can support me against its te

[*Goes to Lady* Wrongl

Sir *Fr.* Now, my lord, you are indeed a man.

Lord *W.* Welcome or not, I must not see you th

madam, without an offer'd hand to raise you. What is 't disturbs you?

Lady *W.* Nothing.

Lord *W.* If I can never more deserve that soft reception of a lover, give me at least the honest freedom of a friend's concern, to wish you well, to search your inmost griefs, and share them.

Lady *W.* I cannot speak to you.

Sir *Fr.* My lord, that tender silence tells you all.

Lord *W.* Too much indeed for sense of shame to bear.——Now, I should blush ever to have deserv'd these just reproachful tears; but when I think they spring from "the dissolving rock of" secret love, I triumph in the thought; "and in this wild irruption "of its joy, my parching heart could drink the cor-"dial dew.

"Lady *W.* What means this soft effusion in my "breast! an aching tenderness ne'er felt before!

"Lord *W.* I cannot bear that melting eloquence of "eyes. Yet nearer, closer to my heart, and live for "ever there—Thus blending our dissolving souls in "dumb unutterable softness.

"Sir *Fr.* Age has not yet so drain'd me, but when "I see a tenderness in virtue's eye, my heart will soften "and it's springs will flow."

Lady *W.* Pity this new confusion of my woman's heart, that would, but knows not how to make returns for this endearment; "that fears, yet wishes, that "burns and blushes, with my sex's shame in yielding" —Can you forgive, my lord, the late uncurb'd ex-

pressions of a disorder'd mind?—But think t
my passion's fault, and pardon 'em.

Lord *W.* O never! never let us think we d
since our sick love is heal'd, for ever be i
forgotten, and removed.

Lady *W.* But let the kind physician that re
be for ever in our thanks remembered. "
"his tender care observ'd the crisis of my di
" ed mind, how rashly had I languish'd out
" ed being."

Lord *W.* This was indeed beyond a frie
ther's care.

Sir *Fr.* My Lord, what I have done, you
peace has over-paid: I knew you both ha
and was too far concern'd indeed to see 'e
passion.

Lord *W.* If Heaven would mark our bound
piness below, or human wisdom were allow'd
from virtue's largest store, in joys, like ours,
less search would end.

" Sir *Fr.* In such soft wives.

" Lady *W.* ——So kind a husband.

" Lord *W.* ——Such a friend."

Enter Mrs. CONQUEST, *and* Miss NOTA

Mrs. *Con.* I 'm all amazement, all rapture
is 't possible so fair, and young a creature,
so just, so exquisite a sense of love.

Miss *Not.* Why not? If I have any sense,
tural to have our first views of happiness from

Mrs. *Con.* My little soul, you charm me! You have a mind to pique Lord George, you say.

Miss *Not.* To a rapidity!—yet, methinks, not so much upon my own account as yours; for his dishonourable usage, as I told you, of your sister. And to convince you of my friendship—there's his own hand to accuse him of it:—read it—hold! hold!—here's my uncle—put it up.

Mrs. *Con.* Can't I steal into your room by and by?

Miss *Not.* With all my heart——Then I'll tell you more. [*Exit Miss* Notable.

Enter Sir FRIENDLY MORAL.

Sir *Fr.* So, child! you are making way, I see; what have you got in your hand there?

Mrs. *Con.* Why, young madam tells me, 'tis something under my Lord George's hand, that will convince me of his abusing my sister—me.

Sir *Fr.* Pray read it.

Mrs. *Con.* [*Reads.*] 'To Mrs. Conquest.

'If you design to make any stay in the country, 'twill be obliging to return the lampoon you stole from me, it being the only copy from the face of this globe to the sky, that is to be had for malice or money. I am, dear madam, with all due extremity, most invincibly yours. BRILLIANT.'

A very tender epistle, truly.

Sir *Fr.* 'T is like the rest of him.

Mrs. *Con.* I 'm glad to find, however, he has good-humour enough not to let the little malice of that chit

fool him to affront me; which I find she has been heartily driving at.

Sir *Fr.* In troth it shews some sense of honour in him.

Mrs. Con. Depend upon't, sir, he does not want it upon an honourable occasion.

Sir *Fr.* And 't would be hard, indeed, not to make some allowances for youth.

Mrs. *Con.* But if am not even with her young ladyship—

Sir *Fr.* I 'm glad you have so innocent a revenge in your hands; pursue your addresses to her; to make her coquetry a little ridiculous, will do her no harm. Well, how go affairs within? How is my Lady Gentle like to come off with his lordship at play?

Mrs. *Con.* Just as I expected: I left her in the last game of losing about double the sum she owes him. That fellow, the Count, is certainly his confederate! His going her halves, is only a pretence to look on, and so, by private signs, to tell my lord every card in her hand.

Sir *Fr.* Not unlikely. What 's to be done next?

Mrs. *Con.* Only, sir, do you engage the company in the next room, while I take my post. Hark! they have done play—I heard the table move: away.

Sir *Fr.* Success to you—— [*Exit severally.*

SCENE II.

Opening, discovers Lord GEORGE *and* Lady GENTLE *rising from play.*

Lord *G.* Have we done, madam?

Lady *Gent.* I have, my lord, and I think for ever —please to tell that. Intolerable fortune!

[*Throws down money.*

Lord *G.* The Count gone!

Lady *Gent.* Oh, yes, my lord! he had not patience, you see.—He ran away when the game was scarce up.

Lord *G.* This bill is his then.

Lady *Gent.* It was, but it's yours now, I suppose.

Lord *G.* Here's forty pounds, madam.

Lady *Gent.* There's a hundred and sixty. [*Gives a bill.*] What do I owe you now, my lord?

Lord *G.* Forty!—a hundred and sixty!—um—just one thousand pounds, madam.

Lady *Gent.* Very well!——and a thousand pounds more borrowed this morning! and all fool'd away! ——fool'd!——fool'd away! [*Fretting.*

Lord *G.* Oh! does it bite? [*Aside.*

Lady *Gent.* Oh, wretch! wretch! miserable, forsaken wretch!—Ay! do! think! think! and sigh upon the consequence of what thou'st done! the ruin! ruin!—the sure ruin that's before thee!

Lord *G.* Suppose, madam, you try your fortune at some other game.

Lady *Gent.* Talk not of play—for I have done with it for ever.

Lord *G.* I can't see you under this confusion at your ill-fortune, madam, without offering all within my power to make you easy.

Lady *Gent.* My lord, I can't be easy under an obligation, which I have no prospect of returning.

" Lord *G.* Come, come! you're not so poor, as your " hard fears would make you. There are a thousand " trifles in your power to grant, that you would never " miss; yet a heart less sensible of your concern than " mine, would prize beyond a ten-fold value of your " losses.

" Lady *Gent.* I'm poor in every thing but folly, and " a just will to answer for its miscarriages. On this, " my lord, you may depend: I'll strain my utmost to " be just to you."

Lord *G.* Alas! you do not know the plenty nature has endowed you with. There's not a tender sigh that heaves that lovely bosom, but might, if given in soft compassion to a lover's pain, release you of the Indies, had you lost 'em. " Can you suppose, that " sordid avarice alone, has push'd my fortune to this " height? Was the poor lucre of a little pelf worth " all this wild extravagance of hazard I have run?— " Give me at least a view more generous, though less " successful; and think, that all I've done was, in " your greatest need, to prove myself your firmest " friend."

Lady *Gent.* My lord, 't would now be affectation not to understand you. " But I'm concern'd, that you

"should think, that fortune ever could reduce me to "stand the hearing of a dishonourable thought from "any man; or if I could be won to folly, at least I "would make a gift, and not a bargain of my heart:" therefore if the worst must be, I'll own the sum, and Sir William shall pay it on demand.

Lady *Gent.* [*Aside.*] Shall he? I know what will become of your ladyship—"You may flounce, and run "away with my line, if you please; but you will find "at the end of it a lovely bearded hook, that will "strangely persuade you to come back again."—A debt of two thousand pounds is not so easily slipt out of.

Lady *Gent.* Now, my lord, if, after all I've said, you have honour enough to do a handsome thing, and not let him know of it—

Lord *G.* Oh! do you feel it, madam? [*Aside.*

Lady *Gent.* 'T is but being a better housewife in pins; and if a hundred pounds a quarter of that will satisfy you, till the whole's paid, you may depend upon't: a little more prudence, and a winter or two in the country, will soon recover it.

"Lord *G.* Press me not with so unkind a thought: "To drive you from the town, ere you have scarce run "through half the diversions of it, would be barba-"rous indeed.

"Lady *Gent.* Would I had never seen it!"

Lord *G.* Since I see, madam, how much you dread an obligation to me, say, I could find the means to free you of this debt, without my obliging you: nay, without a possibility of your losing more: I would even unthank'd relieve you.

Lady *Gent.* That's a proposal I can't comprehend, my lord.

Lord *G.* I'll make it more engaging yet: for give but a promise you'll weigh the offer in one moment's thought before you answer it; and in return, by all my heart's last bleeding hopes, I swear, that even your refusal then shall silence my offensive love, and seal its lips for ever.

Lady *Gent.* I think, my lord, on that condition, I may hear you.

Lord *G.* Thus then I offer—I'll tailly to you on one single card; which if your fortune wins, the sums you owe me then shall all be quit, and my offensive hopes of love be dumb for ever: if I win, those sums shall still be paid you back, with this reserve, that I have then your silent leave to hope.

Lady *Gent.* My lord——

Lord *G.* I beg you do not answer yet—Consider, first, this offer shuts outs my very humblest hope from merit, is certain to recover all you've lost, with equal chance, to rid you of, I fear, a hateful lover; and but at worst, make it your avoidless fortune to endure him.

Lady *Gent.* A bold and artful bait, indeed! [*Aside.*

Lord *G.* I've done; and leave you to the moment's pause you promised.

Lady *Gent.* [*Aside.*] A certainty to quit the sums I owe! A chance with it, to rid me of his assaulting love! A blest deliverance indeed! But then the lot is equal too, of being oblig'd to give him hope, my secret, conscious leave to love—That thought imbitters

all again: 'tis horrid, loathsome, and my disease less formidable than such a cure. Why do I hold it in a moment's thought? Be bold and tell him so; for while I pause, he hopes in spight of me—Hold—

Lord *G.* Ay? think a little better on't. [*Aside.*

Lady *Gent.* [*Aside.*] To do it rashly, may incense him to my ruin: he has it in his power. He may demand my losings of my husband's honour! who, though 'twill make his fortune bleed to do't, I'm sure will pay 'em. Two thousand pounds, with what I've lately lost, might shock the measures of a larger income. What face must I appear with, then, whose shameful conduct is the cause on't?—The consequence of that must, like an inward canker, feed upon our future quiet! His former friendly confidence must wear a face of strangeness to me: his ease of thought, his cheerful smiles, with all the thousand hoarded pleasures of his indulgent love, are lost: then lost for ever! Insupportable dilemma! What will become of me?

Lord *G.* [*Aside.*] Ah! poor lady! it's a hard tug indeed; but by the grace of necessity, virtue may get over it.

Lady *Gent.* [*Aside.*] If some women had this offer now, they'd make a trifle of the hazard! Nay, even of their losing it.

Lord *G.* [*Aside.*] Well said! take courage!——There's nothing in it——it's a good round sum—half ready money too——think of that—Suppose I should touch the cards a little.

Lady *Gent.* [*Aside.*] Hope! he hopes already, from his offer: but then he offers me the means to kill it too! Say he should win, he takes that hope but from his fortune, not my virtue! Beside--am I so sure to lose? Is 't in his fate, that he must ever win? Why shall not I rather think, that Providence has brought me to this stress, only to set my follies dreadful in my view, and reaches now, at last, its hand to save and warn me on the precipice?—It must—it is—my flattering hope will have it so—Impossible so critical a chance can lose——My fancy strengthens on the thought, my heart grows bold, and bids me venture.

Lord *G.* Shall I deal, madam?———or———

Lady *Gent.* Quick, quickly then, and take me while my courage can support it. [*He shuffles the Cards.*]—— "Forgive me, Virtue, if I this once depend on fortune "to relieve thee."

Lord *G.* Now, fortune for the bold—I 've dealt—— 'T is fix'd for one of us.

Lady *Gent.* There. [*She sets upon the king.*

Lord *G.* The king!—'tis mine.

[*Lord* George *taillies, and Lady* Gentle *loses.*

Lady *Gent.* Distraction!—Madness—Madness only can relieve me now.

Lord *G.* Soh! my venture is arrived at last—Now to unlade it. These bills, madam, now are yours again. [*Lays them down.*] But why this hard, unkind concern? Be just at least, and don't in these reluctant tears, drown all the humble hopes that fortune has bequeathed me: or if they press too rude and sudden

LADYS LAST STAKE

for their welcome, chide them but gently; they are soft as infant-wishes, one tender word will hush them into whispers.

Lady *Gent.* Thus with low submission, on my knees, I beg for pity of my fortune? Oh, save me! save me from your cruel power: pity the hard distresses of a trembling wretch, whom folly has betrayed to ruin.—Oh! think not I can ever stain my virtue, and preserve my senses! For while I think, my shrinking heart will shudder at the horror: this trembling hand will wither in your touch, or end me in distraction. If you 've a humane soul—Oh, yet be greatly good, and save me from eternal ruin!

"Lord *G.* These bug-bear terrors——Pray be raised——

"Lady *Gent.* Oh, never!

"Lord *G.* Which inexperience forms, would vanish "in a moment's just or generous thought: and since "the right of fortune has decreed me hope, your "word, your faith, your honour stand engaged to "pay it."

Enter a Stranger, *bluntly, with a Letter.*

Strang. Lady.

Lady *Gent.* Ah!

Lord *G.* How now! what 's the meaning of this?

Strang. I have sworn to deliver this into your hands, though I should find you at your prayers.

Lady *Gent.* Who are you, sir?

Strang. Nobody.

Lady *Gent.* Whence come you?

Strang. From nobody——Good-by. [*Exit.*

Lord *G.* Fire and furies! what a ridiculous interruption is this?

Lady *Gent.* I 'm amaz'd.

Lord *G.* What can it mean?

Lady *Gent.* Ha! what 's here! Bank bills of two thousand pounds! The very sums I have lost!——No advice! Not a line with them! No matter whence they came! From no enemy, I 'm sure; better owe them any where, then here.

Lord *G.* I fancy, madam, the next room were——were——

Lady *Gent.* No, my lord—our accounts now need no privacy—there 's your two thousand pounds.

Lord *G.* What mean you, madam?

Lady *Gent.* To be as you would have me, just, and pay my debts of honour: for those that you demand against my honour, by the known laws of play are void: where honour cannot win, honour can never lose. And now, my lord, it is time to leave my folly, and its danger—Fare you well.

Lord *G.* Hold, madam, our short account is not made even yet: your tears, indeed, might fool me into pity, but this unfair defiance never can: since you would poorly falsify your word, you 've nothing but your sex to guard you now; and all the favour that you now can hope, is, that I 'll give your virtue even its last excuse, and force you to be just.

Lady *Gent.* Ah!

Enter Mrs. CONQUEST, *with her Sword drawn.*

Mrs. *Con.* Hold, sir! unhand the lady.

Lord *G.* Death! again! [*Draws.*

Mrs. *Con.* My lord, this is no place to use our swords in; this lady's presence may sheath them here, without dishonour. You pardon, madam, for this rude intrusion, which your protection, and my own injured honour, have compelled me to.

Lord *G.* Let me advise you, sir, to have more regard to this lady's honour, than to suppose my being innocently here at cards, was upon the least ill thought against it.

Mrs. *Con.* My lord, that 's answered, in owning I have over-heard every word you have said this half-hour.

Lord *G.* The devil! he loves her, sure! You are to be found, sir———

Mrs. *Con.* Oh! my lord, I shall not part with you; but I have first a message to you from my sister, which you must answer instantly: not but I know her pride contemns the baseness you have used her with; for which she 'd think perhaps, your disappointment here an over-paid revenge: but there 's a jealous honour in our family, whose injuries are above the feeble spirit of a girl to punish, that lies on me to vindicate, and calls for warmer reparation——Follow me.

Lady *Gent.* Good sir!——my lord, I beg for pity's sake, compose this breach some milder way—If blood should follow on your going hence, what must the

world report of me? My fame's undone for ever—Let me intreat you, sir, be pacified, my lord will think of honourable means to right you sister——My lord, for mercy's sake———

Lord *G.* Your pardon, madam, honour must be free before it can repair: compulsion stains into cowardice—Away, sir—I follow you.

[*Exeunt Lord* George *and Mrs.* Conquest.

Lady *Gent.* Oh, miserable wretch! to what a sure destruction has thy folly brought thee!

Enter Sir FRIENDLY MORAL.

Sir *Fr.* Dear madam, what's the matter? I heard high words within: no harm, I hope?

Lady *Gent.* Murder, I fear, if not prevented: my Lord George, and Sir John Conquest have quarrelled, and are gone out this moment in their heat to end it.

Sir *Fr.* How!

Lady *Gent.* I beg you, sir, go after them; should there be mischief, the world will certainly report, from false appearances, that I am the cause.

Sir *Fr.* Don't think so, madam, I'll use my best endeavours to prevent it! In the mean time, take heed your disorder don't alarm the company within—Which way went they?

Lady *Gent.* That door, sir. [*Exit Sir* Friendly.]—Who 's there?

Enter a Servant.

Run quick, and see if the garden-door in the park be

locked—[*Exit* Servant.] How strict a guard should virtue keep upon its innocence! How dangerous, how faithless are its lawful pleasures, when habitual! This vice of play, that has, I fear, undone me, appeared at first a harmless, safe amusement; but stealing into a habit, its greatest hazards grew so familiar, that even the face of ruin lost its terror to me. Oh, reflection! how I shudder at thee! the shameful memory of what I have done this night, will live with me for ever.

Re-enter Servant.

Serv. Madam, the garden-door was wide open.

Lady *Gent.* Did you hear no noise, or bustle, in the park?

Serv. No, madam. [*Exit* Servant.

Lady *Gent.* They 're certainly gone out that way, and Sir Friendly must miss of them—Oh, wretch! wretch! that stood'st the foremost in the rank of prudent, happy wives, art now become the branded mark of infamy and shame. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

Changes to the Park. Enter Lord GEORGE.

Lord *G.* So, I think we 've lost the fellows that observed us; and if my gentleman's stomach holds, now I 'm at leisure to entertain him. Death! was ever glorious hope so inveterately disappointed? To bring her to the last stake, to have her fast upon my hook,

nay, in my hand, and after all, to have her whip through my fingers like an eel, was the very impudence of fortune—What! not come yet! He has not thought better on't, I hope—It's a lovely clear moon.—I wish it does not shine through somebody presently.

Enter four Fellows *at a distance.*

1st Fel. Stand close, softly, and we have him——— By your leave, sir. [*They seize him.*

Lord *G.* So! here's like to be no sport to-night, then.—I'm taken care of, I see——Nay, pray gentlemen, you need not be so boisterous—I am sensible we are prevented.

2d Fel. Damn your sense, sir. [*Trips up his heels.*

1st Fel. Blood, sir, make the least noise, I'll stick you to the ground.

Lord *G.* I beg your pardon, gentlemen, I find I am mistaken! I thought you had only come to preserve my person, but I find 't is my purse you have a passion for—You're in the wrong pocket, upon my faith, sir.

1st Fel. Pull off his clothes, make sure work; that's the shortest way.

Lord *G.* With submission, sir, there's a shorter—and if you pull off my skin you won't find another sixpence in the inside on't.

2d Fel. What's this?

Lord *G.* Only a table-book; you don't deal in paper, I presume?

1st Fel. Rot your paper, sir, we'll trust no man!—Money down's our business.

Enter Mrs. CONQUEST.

Mrs. *Con.* How now, gentlemen, what are you doing here?

Lord *G.* Only borrowing a little money, sir; the gentlemen will be gone presently.

1*st Fel.* Hark you, you bastardly beau, get about your business—or, lay hold on him, Jack———

Mrs. *Con.* Me! Rascal——look you, dogs——release that gentleman, quick——Give him his sword again this minute—or— [*Presents a pistol.*

Lord *G.* And my money, I beseech you, sir.

1*st Fel.* Blood! stand him, Jack. Five to one he don't kill. The dog has a good coat on, and may have money in his pocket.

2*d Fel.* Drop your pistol, sir, or spill my blood, I'll stick you.

Mrs. *Con.* Do you brave me, villains—Have at you. [*She presents and misses fire.*

1*st Fel.* Oh, oh! Mr. Bully, have we met with you?——Come on, sir——there, sir, that will do, I believe. [*Two of them secure Lord* George.

" 3*d Fel.* What, is he down? Strip him. [*They push, she falls.*

" 2*d Fel.* No, rot him, he 's not worth it——let 's " brush off." [*Exit.*

Lord *G.* Barbarous dogs! How is it, sir?

Mrs. *Con.* I am killed—I fear the wound 's quite through me.

Lord *G.* Mercy forbid! Where is 't?

Mrs. *Con.* Oh! don't touch me—I beg you c help, or any one to witness that my last words c you guiltless of this accident.

Lord *G.* This generous reproach has more tha quished me——I think I see a chair in the Ma Chair, chair!—they come——Believe me, sir, I so just a sense of your misfortune, and your h that my full heart now bleeds with shame to how grossly I have wronged you in your sister's ness: but if you live, the future study of my lif be with utmost reparation to deserve your frien

Enter Chairman.

Chair. Here: who calls chair.

Lord *G.* Here, friend, help up this gentleman wounded by some foot-pads, that just now set u —Softly——Carry him to Sir William Gentle'i in——

Chair. I know it very well, sir.

[*Exeunt* Chairmen *with Mrs.* Con

Lord *G.* Make haste, while I run for a surge Death! how this misfortune shocks and alters m

SCENE IV.

Changes to Lady Gentle's. *Enter* Miss NOTAB

Miss *Not.* So, my plot takes, I find the famil a terrible confusion: Sir John has certainly calle to an account for the letter I gave him. If th

does not allow me the reputation of this quarrel—I have very hard fortune. Lord! what a mortified creature will poor Mrs. Conquest be, when she hears in the lonesome country, that her own brother has fought with her only lover, for his offers of love to me? Dear soul! what must it think, when such a raw unfit thing as I, gives such a great creature as she so unexpected a confusion? She can't take it ill, sure, if one should smile when one sees her next.

Enter Mrs. HARTSHORN, *crying.*

Mrs. *Hart.* Oh, dear madam! sad news.

Miss *Not.* What's the matter?

Mrs. *Hart.* My Lord George has killed Sir John Conquest.

Miss *Not.* Oh, Heavens! Upon what account! Art sure he 's killed? Didst see him dead?

Mrs. *Hart.* No, madam, he 's alive yet. They 've just brought him in a hackney-chair, but they say the wound 's quite through his body. Oh! 'tis a ghastly sight!

Miss *Not.* Malicious fortune! Had it been t' other's fate. I could have borne it. To take from me the only life I ever really loved, is insupportable.

Mrs. *Hart.* Won't your ladyship go in and see him madam?

Miss *Not.* Pr'ythee leave me to my griefs alone.

Mrs. *Hart.* Ah! poor gentleman! [*Exit.*

Miss *Not.* Pretty creature! I must see him——but it shall be in an undress—it will be proper, at least, to

give my concern the advantage of as much diso
as I can. [*E*

SCENE V.

Drawing, discovers Mrs. CONQUEST *in an ar*
chair, with Lady GENTLE, Lord WRONGL
Lady WRONGLOVE, *and* Servants *about her.*

" Mrs. *Con.* No surgeon yet?

" Lord *W.* Here 's my Lord George, and I be
" the surgeon with him."

Enter Lord GEORGE, Sir FRIENDLY, *and* Surge

Lord *G.* Come, sir, pray be quick, there 's
patient. How is it, sir?

Mrs. *Con.* Oh!

Sir *Fr.* 'T was not in my fortune, madam, to
vent this accident. [*To Lady* G

Sur. By your leave, sir—your coat must come
sir.

Mrs. *Con.* Hold—Hark you, sir——

[*Whispers the* Surg

Sur. I am surprized indeed—A woman! but d
be uneasy, madam, I shall have all due regard to
sex.

Omnes. A woman!

Lord *G.* Ha!

Mrs. *Con.* To raise your wonder, ladies, equ
your pity, know then, I am not what I seem, th

jured brother of Mrs. Conquest; but she, herself, the feeble champion of my own despair.

Lord *G.* Distraction.

Lady *Gent.* Oh, my fatal folly! what ruin art thou now the cause of.

Lady *W.* Poor unhappy creature!

Lord *W.* What have you done, my lord?

Lord *G.* Oh, blind, besotted sense! Not by a thousand pointing circumstances to fore-know this secret, and prevent its consequence! How shall I look on her?

ur. No hopes indeed, sir.

Sir *Fr.* Take heed—Art sure 'tis mortal?

Sur. Sir, 't is impossible she can live three hours.—The best way will be to convey the lady to bed, and let her take a large dose of opium: all the help I can give her, is the hopes of her going off in her sleep.

Lady *Gent.* Oh, piteous creature!

Lord *W.* A heart so generous, indeed, deserved a kinder fate.

Lord *G.* [*Throwing himself at Mrs.* Conquest's *feet.*] Oh, pardon, injured goodness! pardon the ungrateful follies of a thoughtless wretch, that burns to be forgiven. Could I have e'er supposed your generous soul had set at half this fatal price my tenderest vows, how gladly lavish had I paid them to deserve such virtue!

Mrs. *Con.* My death, my lord, is not half so terrible, as the wide wound this rash attempt must give my bleeding reputation.

Lord *G.* To cure that virgin fear, this moment I

conjure you, then, before your latest breath forsakes you, let the pronouncing priest, in sacred union of our hands, unite our honour too, and in this full reduction of my vanquished heart, silence all envious questions on your fame for ever.

Mrs. *Con.* 'T would be, I own, an ease in death, to give me the excuse of dying honourably yours.

Lord G. My lord, your chaplin's near, I beg he may be sent for.

Lord *W.* This minute———

Lady *W.* An honourable, though unfortunate amends.

Mrs. *Con.* We have seen happier hours, my lord; but little thought our many cheerful evenings would have so dark a night to end 'em.

Lady *Gent.* Mournful, indeed!

Lord *G.* How gladly would I pay down future life to purchase back one past, one fatal hour!

Mrs. *Con.* Is 't possible!

Lord *G.* What!

Mrs. *Con.* The world should judge, my lord, so widely of your heart, that only what was grosly sensual could affect it:———Now, sir, [*To* Sir Friendly.] what think you? With all this headstrong wildness of a youthful heat, one moment's thought, you see, produces love, compassion, tenderness, and honour. And now, my lord, to let you see 't was not my interest, but innocent revenge, that made me thus turn champion to my sex's honour; since by this just exposing the weakness of your inconstancy, I have re-

duced you fairly to confess the power of honourable love, I thus release you of the chain: for, know, I am as well in health as ever. [*Walks from the chair.*

Lord *G.* Ha! [*Joyfully surprised.*

Mrs. *Con.* And if the darling pleasures of abandoned liberty have yet a more prevailing charm, you now again are free; return, and revel in the transport.

Lord *G.* Is there a transport under heaven like this?

Lady *Gent.* Oh, bless'd deliverance!

Lord *W.* Surprising change!

Lady *W.* No wound, nor danger, then, at last?

Mrs. *Con.* All, all, in every circumstance, I 've done this night, my wound, the robbery, the surgeon, (here 's one can witness) all was equally dissembled as my person.

Lord *G.* Is 't possible?

Lord *W.* The most consummate bite, my lord, that ever happened in all the circumstances of human nature.

Lord *G.* Oh, for a strain of thought, to out-do this spiteful virtue!

Lord *W.* Why, faith, my lord, 't was smartly handsome not to cheat you into marriage, when 't was so provokingly in her power.

Mrs. *Con.* If you think it worth your revenge, my Lord——Come, for once I 'll give your vanity leave to humble my pride, and laugh in your turn at the notable stir I have made about you.

Lord *G.* Since you provoke me then, prepare to start and tremble at my revenge——I will not only

marry thee this instant, but the next spiteful moment insolently bed thee too, and make such ravenous havoc of thy beauties, that thou shalt call in vain for mercy of my power——Ho! within there! Call the chaplain.

Mrs. *Con.* Hold, my lord!

Lord *G.* Nay, no resistance—By the transporting fury thou hast raised, I 'll do 't.

Mrs. *Con.* This is downright violence——My Lord Wronglove—— [*Struggling.*

Lord *W.* Don't be concern'd, madam; he never does any harm in these fits.

Mrs. *Con.* Have you no shame?

Lord *G.* By earth, seas, air, and by the glorious impudence of substantial darkness, I am fix'd.

Mrs. *Con.* Will no one help me?—Sir Friendly!—

Sir *Fr.* Not I, in troth, madam; I think his revenge is a very honest one.

Lord *G.* Confess me victor, or expect no mercy.—Not all the adamantine rocks of virgin coyness, not all your trembling, sighs, prayers, threats, promises, or tears, shall save you. Oh, transport of devouring joy! [*Closely embracing her.*

Mrs. *Con.* Oh, quarter, quarter!——Oh, spare my periwig!

Lord *W.* Victoria, victoria! The town 's our own!

Sir *Fr.* Fairly won, indeed, my lord!

Lord *G.* Sword in hand, by Jupiter. And now, madam, I put myself into garrison for life.

Mrs. *Con.* Well, people may say what they will;

but upon some occasions, an agreeable impudence saves one a world of impertinent confusion. [*Aside.*

Lord *G.* And now, madam, to let you see you have as much subdued my follies as my heart—First, let me humbly ask pardon for offences——Here, [*To* Lady Gentle.] these sums, madam, I now must own, to serve my shameful ends, were all unfairly won of you; which, since I never meant to keep, I thus restore, and with 'em give a friendly warning of your too mixed a company in play.

Lady *Gent.* My lord, I thank you; and shall henceforth study to deserve the providence that saved me—If I mistake not too, I have some bills that call for restitution. Here, [*To* Mrs. Con.] no one could, I'm sure, be more concerned to send them. Friendships concealed are double obligations.

Mrs. *Con.* I sent them to relieve you, madam; but since your danger has no farther need of them——

[*Takes the bills.*

Sir *Fr.* Now, child, I claim your promise——Here comes another of your small accounts that is not made up yet.

Mrs. *Con.* Fear not, sir; I'll pay it to a scruple.

Enter Miss NOTABLE *weeping, in a night-dress.*

Miss *Not.* Oh! where 's this mournful sight?—Your pardon, ladies, if my intruding tears confess the weakness of a harmless passion; that now 't would be ungrateful to conceal. Had I not loved too well, this fatal accident had never been.

Mrs. *Con.* Well, don't be concerned, dear madam; for the worst part of the accident is, that I am found, at last, it seems, to be no more fit for a wife, than, as I told you, you were for a husband.

Miss *Not.* Ha! [*In confusion.*

Mrs. *Con.* Not but I had some thoughts of marrying you too; but then I fancied you'd soon be uneasy under the cold comforts of petticoats——So—I don't know—the good company has even persuaded me to pull off my breeches, and marry Lord George.

Miss *Not.* Married!—Base man! is this the proof of your indifference to Mrs. Conquest?

[*Aside to* Lord George.

Lord *G.* 'T is not a proof yet indeed. But I believe I shall marry her to night; and then you know, my life, I am in a fair way to it.

Miss *Not.* Jeer'd by him too! I'll lock myself up in some dark room, and never see the world again. [*Exit.*

Lady *W.* [*To* Lord W.] Was she that creature then, the little wicked cause of my disquiet?—How ridiculous have you made my jealousy!—Farewell the folly and the pain.

Lord *W.* Farewell the cause of it for ever.

Lady *Gent.* [*To* Sir Fr.] The Count, you say, his accomplice! How I tremble! But I have done with it for ever. Such ruinous hazards need no second warning.

Lord *G.* I fancy nuncle, I begin to make a very ridiculous figure here, and have given myself the air of more looseness than I have been able to come up to.

Mrs. *Con.* I 'm afraid that 's giving yourself the air of more virtue than you'll be able to come up to—— But however, since I can't help it, I had as good trust you.

Lord *G.* And when I wrong that trust, may you deceive me.

Sir *Fr.* And now, a lasting happiness to all.

[*Coming forward to the audience.*

Let those that here, as in a mirror, see
Those follies, and the dangers they have run,
Be cheaply warn'd, and think these 'scapes their own.

[Exeunt.

THE END.

CYRUS.

A

TRAGEDY,

BY MR. JOHN HOOLE.

ADAPTED FOR

THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOK,

By Permission of the Manager.

The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation.

LONDON:

Printed for the Proprietors, under the Direction of
JOHN BELL, British Library, STRAND,
Bookseller to His Royal Highness the PRINCE of WALES

MDCCXCV.

TO THE

DUTCHESS

OF

NORTHUMBERLAND.

MADAM,

PERMIT me to assure your Grace of the deep sense I retain of your great goodness and condescension in the protection which you have been pleased to extend to my first effort in the Drama.

Were I to listen to those suggestions that naturally arise in the mind of a writer, on the first dawnings of success, the favourable reception which this Tragedy has met with from the public, would lead me to hope that it might not be found wholly unworthy of your Grace's patronage: but when I reflect how many circumstances contribute to please on the stage, where every thought or expression is enforced with the graces of action and utterance, I cannot but be anxious lest the Reader should withhold that approbation in the closet which the Spectator testified in the representation.

It is with the utmost deference I submit the following scenes to your Grace's perusal, and am,

MADAM,

With the greatest respect,

Your Grace's most obliged, most obedient,

and most devoted servant,

JOHN HOOLE.

Clement's Inn, Dec. 14. 1768.

PROLOGUE.

Spoken by Mr. SMITH.

NEW to the stage, before this dread array,
Prepar'd to offer here his virgin play,
Our tim'rous author, diffident of praise,
Grafts his first laurels on another's bays;
Takes from another's breast the gen'rous fire,
And fits to English strains a foreign lyre.
Aspires to please by unsuspected means,
Importing passion from Italian scenes;
Where heroes combat to soft music's note;
And tyrants warble thro' an eunuch's throat:
To symphony despairing lovers sigh;
And struggling traitors by the gamut die!
Yet here a living bard, whose fame out-runs
The foremost of the tuneful drama's sons,
Can ev'n in song his magic power dispense,
At once uniting harmony and sense.
From him our poet now essays to write,
And plans from him the story of to-night;
A well-known tale—who has not heard the name
Of CYRUS, *and the rising Median fame?*
Each puling school-boy can discuss the theme;
The suff'ring grandson, and the monarch's dream.

O! should his genius catch the inspiring thought,
And nobly copy what was nobly wrought;

Or where the master's hand but sketch'd the line,
With happy warmth fill up the bold design;
Then ev'ry figure with full force imprest,
May wake the feelings of th' impassion'd breast;
While each bright eye, amidst this circle, pays
The tribute of involuntary praise.

Dramatis Personæ.

COVENT GARDEN.

	Men.
ASTYAGES,	Mr. Richardson.
CAMBYSES,	Mr. Farren.
CYRUS,	Mr. Holman.
HARPAGUS,	Mr. Harley.
MITHRANES,	Mr. Hull.
MIRZA,	Mr. Ledger.
	Women.
MANDANE,	Miss Hopkins,
ASPASIA,	Mrs. Yates.

Officers, Guards, Messengers, &c.

SCENE, On the borders of Medea.

CYRUS.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A Wood; a stately Pavilion erected for Astyages; *View of a Temple at a distance. Enter* MANDANE, *and* ASPASIA.

Mandane.

BEHOLD the limits of the Median land,
And see the temple where Astyages
Returns each year to shed a victim's blood,
On great Astarte's altar—Oh! Aspasia!
This is the place, the day, nam'd by my father
To bless me with the tenderest interview;
Here shall I meet again my long-lost Cyrus:
Is he not found, was he not snatch'd from death,
Sav'd by some God to fill these eager arms!
And is not this the happy destin'd grove,
Where once again I shall embrace my child?

Asp. 'T is true—but what can all this passion mean?

Mand. What can it mean!—where is my Cyrus hid?
What does he?—wherefore comes he not?

Asp. Alas!
Time, wing'd with swiftest pinions, lags behind
The ardent wishes of a mother's love.
Thou know'st the hour of sacrifice is fix'd
For his reception; that we must not pay
Our vows to night's pale queen, till yonder sun
Declines to ev'ning skies, and now his beams
But just begin to dawn o'er eastern hills.

Mand. Alas! Aspasia—still I fear———

Asp. And wherefore?
When now Astyages no longer seeks
His death, but wishes to behold his Cyrus,
To give him back a parent's kind protection,
And shew, in him, our Media's future king?

Mand. Yet if the visions of the night may claim
Belief———a dreadful dream———

Asp. And shall Mandane
Be mov'd with shadows! sure you should detest
Such visionary fears; from these you first
May date your sorrows: well you know, your father,
On the vain credit of a dream, condemn'd
Your Cyrus to be slain; nor this suffic'd;
But that the nuptial bed no more might prove
Fruitful to thee in children, and to him
Give endless cause of terror, far from hence
To banishment he sent your lord, your husband,
Your dear Cambyses, where, in Persia's realm
He lives, an alien to his consort's arms.

Mand. And yet 't is not a dream that twice ten years
Have seen the cheerful harvest crown our fields,

Since at his birth my child was ravish'd from me.
On this blest day I hope once more to see him;
And thinks, Aspasia, now to find me calm?

Asp. You lost your Cyrus when your age had scarce
Beheld the round of thirteen annual suns;
And can you still so deeply feel the grief
Imprest in life's first bloom?

Mand. Alas! Aspasia,
Thou know'st not what it is to be a mother.

Asp. Yet your Aspasia too has known her sorrows:
If you lament a husband and a son,
I mourn a brother's loss, who fell beneath
The vengeful anger of Astyages.

Mand. There, there, my bosom shar'd thy father's sufferings,
And oft I 've wept in secret his misfortunes.
Unhappy man! a fatal recompense
My father gave thee for his grandson sav'd!
What hast thou suffer'd for thy love to Cyrus,
Thy loyal truth!—But see, the good man comes;
He comes, perchance, with tidings of my son——
O, haste, my Harpagus, where is he?

Enter HARPAGUS.

Harp. Princess,
Your son is now arriv'd.

Mand. Arriv'd!—ah!——where?

Harp. He must not, till Astyages appears,
Presume to pass the borders of the kingdom:
'T is so decreed.

Mand. Then let us seek him out
Where now impatient, with long exil'd feet,
He comes to tread his native wish'd-for soil,
And ease a mother's pains. [*Going,*

Harp. It must not be.
Mandane, stay---your father will be present,
A witness to your meeting.

Mand. Wherefore then
This long delay?——O, did Astyages
Feel half Mandane feels, these arms had now
Embrac'd my dearest Cyrus! what detains
My father thus?

Harp. 'Ere now he 's on his way;
But the long pomp that waits on Media's kings,
Forbids his swift approach.

Mand. And must Mandane
Attend the dull and tedious forms of state?
Aspasia, if thou lov'st me, instant go,
And seek the blooming youth.---Yet stay, and hear me;
Observe his air, his voice, his ev'ry look;
Mark if his features bear his mother's likeness,
Or his lov'd father's---But, alas! I rave;
Thou never knew'st his hapless banish'd father!
Relate my sufferings, and enquire of his:
Ask what kind hand supply'd a mother's care;
How when, Mandane, torn with heart-felt anguish,
Deem'd him a prey to savage rage, the woods
Preserv'd him in their hospitable shades.
Tell him---O, heaven! I know not what---but tell him
More than a mother's fondness can express,

Not what I speak, but all I wish to utter.
O fly! and with the rapid speed of thought,
Return to my impatience. [*Exit* Aspasia.
Harp. Should this day,
That gives once more your son to your embrace,
Restore Cambyses to you———
Mand. Would to heaven
I might indulge that hope---All gracious powers!
What torture in his exile must he feel,
To hear his son yet lives; to know this day
Restores my Cyrus to his native land;
Yet be deny'd to gaze with transport on him,
Or clasp him in a father's sheltering arms!
Harp. Hear, and be silent;---happier fortune now
Prepares to crown each wish your soul can form:
Cambyses is at hand.
Mand. Cambyses? where?
Oh! tell me, Harpagus.
Harp. I dare not further
Explain it now---let this suffice.
Mand. Alas!
I fear thou dost deceive me.
Harp. No, Mandane,
Trust to my faith—This day you shall behold him.
Mand. Ye powers! what deluge of unhop'd-for bliss
Now bursts upon me! O, my son! my husband!
Happy Mandane---Harpagus, my friend,
Teach me to bear this wild excess of joy.
Harp. Be calm, compose your looks; let not the king
Perceive this conflict of tumultuous passions.

Mand. Yes, I will go, and meet Astyages;
Will strive to hide the strugglings of my soul,
Check these emotions, though my swelling bosom
Can scarce find room to hold the mighty transport;
Transport, which only such as I can feel,
And only those, who love like me, conceive. [*Exit.*

Harp. [*Alone.*] Thus far 't is well.---This day I mean to shew
The hidden Cyrus to the expecting world.
The realm is ripe for a revolt; the nobles
Resolve to invest him with the regal sway———
But my resentment still demands its victim:
Yes, dearest shade of my lamented son,
For ever present to thy father's sight,
Thou yet shalt be appeas'd; for this so long
I 've worn the mask of loyalty---but now
Vengeance is on the wing, she towers aloft,
And, like an eagle, kens her destin'd prey. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Changes to a Grove; outside of a small building of simple Architecture, representing the dwelling of Mithranes. *Enter* CYRUS and MITHRANES.

Cyrus. Can it be possible? O say, my father,
For such thou still hast been, am I indeed
The Median Cyrus? Sure I dream! am I
The offspring of Cambyses and Mandane?
That wretched offspring, whom Astyages

Vide pinx.

M.r HOLMAN as CYRUS.

Cyrus – Can it be possible? –

British Library Strand June 30 1795.

Sentenc'd to die, when scarce the vital spirit
Breath'd from his infant lips.

Mith. Believe me, prince,
Thou art that offspring.

Cyrus. Tell me then, Mithranes,
How many bear the name? Thou know'st already
One Cyrus, on the borders of the land
Is now arriv'd; and comes not here the king
To welcome his approach?

Mith. The king's deceiv'd;
That Cyrus is but feign'd---thou art the true.

Cyrus. Whence is this mystery?

Mith. Astyages,
When thou wert yet unborn, beheld a vision
That fill'd his soul with dread.

Cyrus. Of this, Mithranes,
Thou need'st not speak; oft have I heard it told,
How, from his dream, the magic had denounc'd,
That of Mandane should a child be born,
That must one day deprive him of his throne:
And well I know at Cyrus' luckless birth,
The rigid charge was given to Harpagus,
To end his life, and ease a monarch's fears.

Mith. From thence begins a tale thou ne'er hast heard:
The cruel sentence Harpagus receiv'd,
His heart refus'd to obey; to me he brought thee,
Wrapp'd in a regal mantle.

Cyrus. Then 't was thou
That in the woods expos'd———

Mith. Not so---be patient———
My consort then (mark well the providence
That watch'd thy preservation) had brought forth
A lifeless child; thy harmless innocence
Excited pity; on thy tender cheek
Stood the big tear, as if thy heart already
Were conscious of misfortune, while thy hands
Were stretch'd, as if to implore protection from us.
My Barce wept, and with a mother's fondness,
Clasp'd in her arms, she strain'd thee to her bosom,
Lull'd thee to rest, and hush'd thy little sorrows.

Cyrus. Forgive me, sir, if gratitude awhile
Breaks in upon your tale, and fills my eyes
In dear remembrance of your Barce's virtues;
She, whose indulgence watch'd my helpless years.

Mith. Thou wert, indeed, the darling of her age.
As my own son I bred thee in these shades,
And call'd thy name Alcæus; in thy stead,
Exposing in the wood the lifeless infant.

Cyrus. What of Astyages?

Mith. When he believ'd
His dire command completed, nature's voice
At length awaken'd in his breast remorse.
Full fifteen years did Harpagus remain
Without disclosing aught; then seem'd the tale
Ripe for discovery: yet he first would prove
The current's depth before he left the shore.
Five years have now elaps'd, since through the realm
The tidings spread, that Cyrus being found
An infant in the forest, was preserv'd

And liv'd among the Scythians: such report
Perhaps the impostor rais'd, or from the rumour
Perhaps he sprung: but be it as it may,
Some bold adventurer, lur'd with hopes of greatness,
Usurp'd thy name.

Cyrus. Is this the Cyrus then
Who comes———

Mith. The same—but mark me—Harpagus
Procur'd the fiction credit with the king;
For thus he reason'd—should Astyages
With joy receive the news, I safely may
Reveal the kingdom's heir: or should his fears
Once more return, and prompt some new design
Against the prince, the baffled aim will light
Upon the impostor's head.

Cyrus. But since the king
Confesses now such tenderness for Cyrus;
At length recalls him from a life of exile,
To clasp him to his bosom, wakens all
The soft endearments in a mother's soul,
And every tender passion in a son;
Wherefore should unavailing caution still
Withhold the secret from him?

Mith. Harpagus
Relies not firmly on the royal goodness;
For when he own'd, that with compassion mov'd,
He had not slain the infant but expos'd him
Amidst the woods, Astyages to punish
His disobedience doom'd to cruel death
His only son; and though the king now seems

So long accustom'd to a father's language;
I now must change my speech---I am no more
The rigid parent that reproves his son;
I am a subject, that with faithful counsels
Would aid his sovereign.

Cyrus. Thou art still my father,
My dearest father——I confess my warm
Ungovern'd temper; but I will suppress
These starts of youth, and learn to dread the path
Thy wisdom points: too dearly should I buy
The throne, if I no more must call thee father.

Mith. Yes, royal youth, thou shalt be still my son,
Son of my fondest hopes;---for thee I 've watch'd
The tedious rounds of twenty circling years
Each turn of fate, in this sequester'd dwelling,
Far distant from the busy haunts of men,
Where, but on this returning annual pomp
Of sacrifice, the print of human feet
Scarce marks the unworn turf.

Cyrus. Once more farewell.
Yes, I will seek yon hallow'd roof to raise
Devotion's voice, and supplicate the gods
To breathe a hero's spirit in this breast;
That when the ripening hours shall bring to light
The wish'd events of this auspicious day,
My soul, enlarg'd to thoughts of conscious greatness,
May hail with virtuous pride its birth to glory. [*Exit.*

Mith. All gracious Heaven, with thy protecting arm
Defend my prince! Let me in one glad moment
Reap the full harvest of my pious toils,

And old Mithranes then has liv'd enough——
But see where Harpagus appears.

Enter HARPAGUS.

Mith. My friend,
Where is Astyages?
Harp. But now arriv'd:
I left him in his tent in gloomy silence,
As if revolving in his mind the end
Of this day's sacrifice. He sends me hither
To learn if Cyrus yet approach the borders,
And what the train he brings.
Mith. Believ'st thou then
He means, indeed, to answer Media's hopes,
And give the realm a successor in Cyrus?
Harp. Trust me, Mithranes, never.---If sometimes
He feigns a momentary joy, or speaks
With seeming fondness of the approach of Cyrus,
Methinks through all the dark disguise appears
Some cruel purpose brooding in his soul.
Mith. Thanks to the power that thus provides a victim
To frustrate ev'ry ill that thence might threaten
The safety of the prince: this bold impostor,
Who wears his name, shall with his name inherit
Each evil that's design'd him.
Harp. Nor does Media
Owe less her thanks to heaven, that gave Mithranes
To rear her prince to every future greatness,
In virtue's safest school, an humble station,

Far from the splendid vices of a court,
Where golden luxury, and silken sloth,
Enervate our unhappy sons.——But say,
Hast thou to Cyrus yet reveal'd his birth?

Mith. I have.

Harp. And how did he receive the tidings?

Mith. Amaz'd at first he heard the important truth;
But when convinc'd---O, had you then beheld
His generous ardour;---scarce could I prevent
His filial love from seeking out Mandane,
And throwing at her feet a darling son.

Harp. Of that we must beware.---The weighty secret
Of his concealment must not be entrusted
To a fond mother's transports; not Cambyses
Knows yet this mystery of fate.

Mith. 'Tis strange Cambyses comes not yet.

Harp. Doubt not, Mithranes,
Cambyses will be present 'ere the hour
Fix'd for the sacrifice; perhaps ev'n now
He lurks disguis'd upon the neighbouring confines.
He must be wary; well thou know'st what danger
Awaits him, should Astyages discover
His mandate disobey'd---but let us part,
We must not thus be found; the king may soon
Be here; where'er he goes, pale visag'd fear,
And black suspicion, on his steps attend.

[*Exeunt severally.*

ACT II. SCENE I.

Continues. Enter MITHRANES.

CYRUS not yet return'd! still, still my breast
Owns all the fears and fondness of a father---
But hark! this way I hear the sound of feet---
Some stranger by his dress---O, mighty gods!
What do I see---sure I should know that face!

Enter CAMBYSES *disguis'd.*

Cam. If in this land you venerate the powers
Of hospitality, direct me, friend,
To where the annual sacrifice is held:
I come a votary from distant climes,
To pay my offering at Astarte's shrine,
And view the sacred pomp.

Mith. Myself will thither
Conduct your steps---it must, it must be he. [*Aside.*

Cam. The gods, protectors of your Median race,
Repay the courteous deed---but tell me farther;
How may a friendless stranger gain access
To princely Harpagus?

Mith. The king now holds him
On business of the state: this day the people
Expect to find the kingdom's heir restor'd;
If haply thou hast heard the name of Cyrus.

Cam. Fame has thro' many a land divulg'd your story:
I knew Cambyses; both in Persia born,

One city bred us: I remember well,
A private warrior, when he sought the court
Of Media's king, till by his merit rais'd
He gain'd Mandane's hand; but dearly since
He paid the price of love with years of exile.
Mith. Shall I yet speak [*Aside*]---Since thou ind
hast known [*To* Cambys
Unfortunate Cambyses---but behold
Astyages is near---avoid his presence:
Thy garb would breed suspicion in the king,
And danger to thyself---in that close covert
A while remain conceal'd. [Cambyses *reti*

Enter ASTYAGES.

Asty. Guards, keep the pass
And suffer none to enter here. [*Speaks to* Mirza *enteri*
Mith. [*Aside.*] What means
Astyages? has he beheld this stranger?
Or has some spy in evil hour for Cyrus,
Reveal'd the secret of his fate?
Asty. Mithranes!
Mith. My sovereign liege.
Asty. Are we alone?
Mith. We are.
Asty. Come near me, Mithranes, tell me, dost th
still
Retain in mind remembrance of the good
I did thee once?
Mith. My mind retains it all.
When first received into your royal court

I ow'd your bounty much; and when I left
The pomp of cities for the sylvan wild,
It was your hand that gave this wish'd retreat.

Asty. Say, if my happiness, if all I sought
Depending on thy zeal, might I not then
Expect to find thee grateful?—answer me.

Mith. What is there in my power that can avail
The welfare of my sovereign?

Asty. Yes, my friend,
Thou can'st do much, can'st firmly fix the crown
Upon thy sovereign's brow—know, all I seek
Is in thy hand—yes, spite of our decree,
Cyrus preserv'd—

Mith. What will my fate do with me! [*Aside.*

Cam. Did not my ears receive the name of Cyrus?
[*Listening.*

Asty. Thy colour fades; thou dost perhaps divine
What I would say.

Mith. Thus postrate at your feet— [*Kneels.*

Asty. No, be not terrify'd, but rise—the deed
Is easier than thy fears have form'd it---Cyrus
Believes our summons, and already comes,
With some few Scythians, on the kingdom's borders,
To wait the expected meeting---well thou know'st,
For years accustom'd to this rustic dwelling,
Each outlet of the wood, and may'st with ease
In some close ambush so dispose of Cyrus,
That he may never wake my terrors more.

Cam. Inhuman murderer! [*Aside.*

Asty. What say'st thou, speak.

Mith. It shall be so, my king shall be obey'd. [*Aside*

Cam. Most impious traitor! [*Aside*

Asty. For the attempt thyself
Alone will not suffice; thou must with care
Select thy trusty partners of the deed.

Mith. There needs no other but my son Alcæus:
'Twere dangerous to confide to other hands,
An enterprize of such import---Alcæus,
Skill'd in the winding mazes of the wood,
Through which, at early dawn, he oft is wont
To urge the savage chase, shall unsuspected
Reach with a distant shaft his life——

Asty. Enough——
'Tis well conceiv'd---go then, my best Mithranes,
Instruct thy son: tell him, Astyages
Expects from him the end of all his terrors;
The deed once done I plant him next my heart,
To grow to wealth and honours.

Mith. Heavenly powers! [*Aside*
Defend me still, and from suspicion's eye
Preserve yon stranger! [*Exit*

Asty. Now, methinks, my mind
Is eas'd of ev'ry fear---Let Cyrus die,
And with him die the many doubts that shake
The bosom of Astyages.

Enter CAMBYSES.

Cam. Revoke
The dreadful mandate which thy lips pronounc'd,

Or by th' eternal gods, the great avengers
Of guiltless blood——.

Asty. Ha! traitor! what art thou,
That lurking thus unseen---death be thy portion.
[*Draws.*

Cam. Nay then—— [*Draws.*

Asty. Off, peasant!---dar'st thou lift thy hand
Against the sun's vicegerent!——

Enter MIRZA *and* Guards.

Mirza. Seize the ruffian,
And instant drag him hence.

[Cambyses *is disarmed, and at a signal from* Astyages *the Guards retire.*

Asty. Audacious villain!
Know'st thou what punishment awaits thy crime?
Already torture shakes his scorpions o'er thee,
And anguish claims thee as her destin'd prey:
Confess what motives urg'd thy desperate deed.

Cam. Whate'er my motives, know, the soul that dares
Attempt a tyrant's life, has fortitude
To brave whate'er a tyrant can inflict.

Asty. Presumptuous slave!

Cam. Look here, Astyages,
View well this face; do not these features wake
Thy recollection? Twice ten years of suff'rance
Have wrought some change, yet sure here still remains
The trace of what I have been.

Asty. Ha! whate'er
Thou art, rightly my better genius warn'd me,

That something baneful to my nature, lurk'd
Beneath those abject vestments.

Cam. Tyrant, yes;
'Tis not for nought thy conscience takes the alarm;
For he that's injur'd ever is the bane
Of him that injures; let this meeting then
Rouse each awak'ning terror in thy soul,
To see the man thou most has wrong'd---Cambyses.

[*Throws open his disguise.*

Asty. Thou wretch! how hast thou dar'd to enter Media
Against our high decree? And com'st thou too,
Assassin like, with sacrilegious rage
To lift thy hand against a monarch's life?
But thou shalt find a welcome.

Cam. Yes, such welcome
As thy paternal love prepares for Cyrus;
Thou hoary ruffian! was it then for this
The nobles of the realm were summon'd here?
For this was Cyrus call'd, to fall a victim
To thy death-dealing minion---curs'd Mithranes!

Asty. Confusion! am I then betray'd? [*Aside.*

Cam. For me!
I scorn thy feeble menaces; I know
My life awaits thy nod---but mark me well,
The time may come, ev'n now perhaps the black,
The fatal hour impends, when thou shalt feel
The avenging hand of heaven.

Asty. What say'st thou, ha!
Does secret treason lurk amid the smiles

Of seeming loyalty? Give me to know
What mischief threatens.

Cam. Seek to know no more;
Let it suffice I 've given thy terrors birth,
And be it thine to cherish them.

Asty. Ho! guards!
Convey this traitor to yon city's walls,
And lay him in some loathsome dungeon; there,
There shalt thou learn to speak.

Cam. Thy rage is fruitless;
Hope not from me to be inform'd of aught
That may import thy safety.

Asty. Lead him hence——
I 'll hear no further—shall a wretch proscrib'd
Revile the awful majesty of kings;
And dare his anger, whose all-powerful word
Can in a moment fix his doom?——Away.

Cam. Come, whither must I go? Conduct me where
The cavern'd earth unfolds her deepest prison,
Where light ne'er dawns; yet steady virtue there
Shall dissipate the gloom; there the firm soul
Shall smile in torture, when amidst the blaze
Of courts, the tyrant's mind shall shrink in darkness,
And while security surrounds his throne,
Trembles with fancy'd terrors. [*Exit, guarded.*

Manent ASTYAGES *and* MIRZA.

Asty. Yes, I feel
His threats already here; my lab'ring breast
Teems with new fears——Mirza.

Mirza. [*coming forward.*] What would my sov'reign?

Asty. Whence did this daring rebel break upon us,
And how elude thy vigilence?

Mirza. My lord,
No steps unnotic'd could have pass'd the guard;
Cambyses must have lurk'd in secret here
Beneath some neighbouring shade; nor knew we aught
Of danger near your person, till the sound
Of tumult brought us to your timely rescue.

Asty. [*Aside.*] What should I think? is then
Mithranes false?
Mirza, I thank thy zeal; be ever thus,
And I 'll reward thee—sure some deep design
Is brooding now against me——

Enter MANDANE.

Mand. Hear me, sir,
O! by these tears——

Asty. What would my daughter? rise——

Mand. O, never, never—here I 'll grow to earth,
'Till pity, kindling in a father's breast,
Extend a gracious hand to save Cambyses.

Asty. Cambyses!——name him not.

Mand. Alas! my father,
After a tedious twenty years of absence,
Fate now returns him, but returns in vain,
If, by your anger, he 's deny'd to view
His lov'd Mandane, to behold his son
Preserv'd; but ah! for him preserv'd in vain!

Asty. Had'st thou, Mandane, heard his rebel threats,
His daring insults breath'd against the throne——

Mand. Forgive the transport of a bosom, torn
With double pangs, the father, and the husband:
Alas! perhaps, he knew not Cyrus liv'd,
He knew not that Astyages had fix'd
This day, to meet and name him for his heir.

Asty. And pleads my daughter in defence of him
Whose impious hand assail'd my life?

Mand. O, heaven!

Asty. Tell me, when treason works the secret mine
To sap my kingdom, shall Mandane's tongue
Extenuate his offence who plans my fall?
But thou, perhaps, art privy to their wiles,
Perhaps confederate with thy father's foes.

Mand. What do I hear? And can your thoughts suggest
(My soul is chill'd with horror) that Mandane
Would join in murder's black conspiracy
Against the hand that gave me life?

Asty. I know not———
Whom should I fear? Methinks I see rebellion
Where duty's most profess'd! and those my power
Can shake with terror, give me equal dread;
But for Cambyses, would'st thou prove thy truth,
Name him no more—thus much a father grants,
He shall not die——I to your tears remit
His forfeit life, which else had fallen the victim
Of torture's sharpest pangs——but as I prize
My crown, again he's banish'd from the land. [*Exit.*

Mand. And is it thus my fate begins to smile?
Is this the meeting Harpagus foretold?
O! my Cambyses!

Enter CYRUS.

What art thou, that break'st
Thus importunely on my grief?

Cyrus. Forgive
This seeming rudeness, beauteous excellence;
A son of freedom, nurtur'd in these woods,
Now shuns a fate that threats that liberty
Which bounteous nature gave.

Mand. What dost thou mean?

Cyrus. The royal guards pursue my steps, and soon
These limbs, that till this hour, have rang'd at large,
O'er the steep hill, or through the forest shade,
May feel the galling weight of servile chains.

Mand. Declare thy crime.

Cyrus. My crime was self-defence:
Th' oppressor's sword was rais'd against my life,
But heaven then nerv'd my strength, and from this arm
The wretch receiv'd that death he meant to give.

Mand. What means my throbbing bosom?—Gentle youth,
Proceed—methinks I feel some secret impulse
To listen to thy story.

Cyrus. As but now
Alone I sought the temple, from the woods
I heard a cry of deep distress:—I turn'd,
And saw two ruffians seize a beauteous maid;
Fir'd at the brutal deed I cast my dart,
And one I slew; the other, struck with terror,

Forsook th' affrighted fair, who trembling fled,
And ere I could pursue her steps, a youth
Of fierce demeanour, clad in rich attire,
With sword unsheath'd, impetuous cross'd my way,
And menac'd vengeance for his slain companion——
But see the nymph herself, whom fav'ring heaven
Sent me to save.

Enter ASPASIA.

Mand. Wert thou the maid distress'd?
And is it true, that thou hast 'scap'd the arm
Of brutal violence?

Asp. Yes, fell destruction
Was hov'ring o'er me, when behold the friend,
That freed Aspasia from impending ruin,
With peril of his own—but, thanks to heaven,
My brave defender lives.—Say, gallant youth,
How did'st thou 'scape the ruffian's boist'rous rage,
That threaten'd thee with death?

Mand. Relate the sequel;
For since Aspasia bears an interest in it,
My heart more freely listens to thy tale.

Cyrus. But little now remains—the fierce invader
Still press'd upon me, whilst a river flow'd
Behind my steps, preventing all retreat;
Disarm'd, what could I do? Necessity
Supply'd me with new arms; sudden I snatch'd
A craggy flint from the rough pebbled shore,
And launch'd against the foe; a sanguine stream
Bath'd all his face, the sword forsook his hand,

And as he stagger'd round, with dying grasp
He seized a bough, that over-hung the tide,
Which yielding to his weight, at once he fell,
And in the waves was lost.

Mand. Is this the crime
That justice should pursue? Yes, my Aspasia,
'Midst all the anguish of a breaking heart,
I feel a dawn of joy for thy deliverance.

Asp. What new distress afflicts Mandane?

Cyrus. [*Aside.*] Gods!
Was it Mandane whom I thus unknown
Have held in converse?

Mand. Oh! I 'll tell thee all,
And rest my sorrows on thy faithful bosom.

Enter Officer *and* Guards.

Officer. Secure yon traitor, who has dar'd to rai
His sacrilegious hand against his prince.

Mand. Against his prince!

Officer. 'T is to his arm we owe
The death of Cyrus.

Mand. Say'st thou—death of Cyrus!

Cyrus. It must be so—mysterious Providence.
[*A*
This hand, impell'd by some o'er-ruling power,
Has slain th' impostor that usurp'd my name.

Mand. And did I hear thee right? Speak, spe
Aspasia,
What meant his words?—Was Cyrus then the slai
O, impious villain.

cer. 'Tis, alas! too true,
prince is dead, and by this youth.
p. O, heaven!
rus. [*aside.*] I must reveal myself—but, no, I have sworn
eep my birth still secret.
nd. O, perfidious!
cam'st thou then to me—O, all ye gods!
ell a well-feign'd story of thy deeds,
thus deride a wretched mother's grief.
rus. Alas! I knew not, princess———
nd. Peace, deceiver;
ı knew'st too well—thy tale is falsehood all.
y lov'd son!—thy mother's better part—
have I lost thee thus again?—distraction!
ny torn heart!
rus. I cannot bear her grief. [*Aside.*
nd. Speak, dear Aspasia, were not then my fears
:d prophetic? thus to lose a son,
nd my hopes thus blasted in their spring,
other's fondest hopes!
rus. O, heaven! you know not—
youth who fell beneath this hand—O! torture.
nd. Guards, drag the monster strait before the king——
p. O, princess, calm the tempest of your rage:
resistless fate impell'd, the youth
r'd this guilt, indulgent heaven extends
veness to involuntary crimes:
ı imitate the mercy of the Gods.
nd. No more, Aspasia—the relentless Gods

To me no mercy shew—my son is murder'd,
My husband doom'd once more to banishment.
What is there else remains in angry fate
To add to what I suffer? every hour
Of my succeeding life is mark'd for horror,
And all my thoughts are now despair and madness.
[*Exi*

Manent CYRUS, ASPASIA, Officer, *and* Guards.

Cyrus. Go, fair Aspasia, follow and support her,
And O! in pity sooth a mother's sorrows.

Asp. A mother's sorrows from Aspasia's friendshi
Shall claim the tenderest care—And yet, Alcæus,
This bosom now has terrors of its own;
I must confess I fear———

Cyrus. What fears afflict
Thy gentle breast?

Asp. The danger of Alcæus:
Think'st thou I can behold the gallant youth,
Who freed me from the ruffian grasp of power,
Expos'd to death, yet feel not for his safety?

Cyrus. My safety merits not Aspasia's care;
Nor think the succour this weak arm could give
To innocence distress'd, was more than heaven
Claims from a heart, that, though in forests bred,
Glows at another's suff'rings.

Asp. Generous youth!
Wherefore, ah! wherefore has relentless fate
Involv'd such virtue in misfortune's maze,
And urg'd thy hand to shed thy prince's blood;
That hand, which seem'd by every God design'd
To guard the life it took.

cer. Remove the prisoner.
rus. Farewell, Aspasia, and remember time
soon dispell this cloud of seeming guilt
cast around Alcæus. [*Exit guarded.*
p. [*Alone.*] Grant it, Heaven!
t mean these heaving sighs, these swelling tears,
flutters thus my heart? Is it compassion,
ratitude to him whose valour sav'd me?
no—I fear a gentler cause excites
e strange emotions—Spite of all the pride
ex and rank inspire—I love Alcæus:
sylvan hero bears down my resolves
still have prov'd in vain: when with my father
ce led me first to visit good Mithranes,
'd with pleasure on his blooming son;
n I saw, yet knew not that I lov'd him,
this day's act that sav'd me from dishonour—
yet for this day's act Alcæus dies——
shall he die for thee?—Ah! no, Aspasia,
guilt was thine, thy fate has murder'd Cyrus;
let me seek the king, plead for Alcæus,
for his forfeit life lay down my own. [*Exit.*

ACT III. SCENE I.

od. The Pavilion of Astyages *seen at a distance.*
Enter MANDANE *and* MITHRANES.

Mandane.

AT hast thou said, Mithranes? Is Alcæus
on, my dearest Cyrus?

Mith. Peace, Mandane,
O heavens! be heedful.
Mand. Where is now the danger?
Mith. Danger is ev'ry where: when cruelty
Extends her iron reign, we ne'er can keep
Too strict a guard upon our speech: a dream
May rouze the slumbering fury: fell suspicion
On innocence will stamp the mark of guilt,
And tyranny assumes the mien of justice,
To punish crimes that never yet had being.
The genial feast, the nuptial bed, the temples
Are not secure from treachery.
Mand. At least,
Confirm my doubting thoughts.
Mith. What further proof
Can you require? Ask your own heart, Mandane;
Your heart will testify a mother's feeling.
Mand. 'T is true, 't is true—O! I remember all—
When first I view'd Alcæus, how my blood
Thrill'd with some unknown passion! Why, Mithranes,
Would'st thou so long conceal him from my love?
Mith. I fear'd to trust maternal tenderness,
Which wisdom ill can rule; had not your sorrows
Awak'd my pity, had I not suspected
The worst from your revenge against Alcæus,
To you your son had still remain'd unknown.
Mand. And yet Mandane's wretched, envious fortune,
Spite of the sunshine that would gild the prospect,

Spreads o'er my day affliction's sable clouds.
Cyrus return'd and living must excite
A mother's dearest transports; but Cambyses
Return'd, and doom'd again to banishment,
Unseen, unwelcom'd, swells this heart with anguish.
Mith. Alas! my Princess, calm your grief; let hope
Point you to future scenes of happiness:
Heaven that preserv'd your Cyrus, will again
Restore Cambyses to your longing arms,
And give him back to liberty and love.
Mand. Fain would I listen to the flattering sounds
Of happiness and peace—But yet, Mithranes,
Thou hast not told the fortunes of my child:
Relate whate'er his tender youth hath suffer'd,
By what strange means—declare each circumstance.
Mith. Some fitter time must tell thee—in the grove
That leads to my retreat, meet me ere long,
And thou shalt learn it all—but soft; from far
I see the king approaching.
Mand. Let us fly,
And bear to him the news that Cyrus lives.
Mith. O, hold! 't was this I feared——
Mand. Thou know'st my son
Is now a prisoner.
Mith. But consent to leave me,
And keep his birth still secret from your father,
I plight my life to free him from his chains,
And give him to your arms.
Mand. Is 't possible?
And may Mandane in thy faith confide?

Mith. Confide in me!—Almighty Powers! is this,
This the reward for all my loyal service!
Is then my truth suspected!

Mand. O! forgive
Th' involuntary doubt, forgive the thoughts
Of one, who long the mark of sorrow's shafts,
Distrusts each promis'd joy—I know thy goodness;
Yes, thou wilt still prevent my busy fears,
Minister to my hopes with faithful hand,
And to preserve the mother, save the son. [*Exit.*

Mith. Mandane, yes—still in this care-worn breast,
Thy Cyrus lives; time, that unnerves these limbs,
Strengthens my loyal truth——be these white locks
An emblem of my faith——But see the king,
Impatient for the news for Cyrus' fate.

Enter ASTYAGES.

Asty. Mithranes!

Mith. Sir, your mandate is obeyed;
Be ev'ry fear that Cyrus rais'd, forgotten,
For Cyrus is no more.

Asty. I know it well:
How do I stand indebted to thy zeal:
And yet, my friend, all is not here at ease,
I fear our secret is betray'd; Cambyses
Reproach'd me with the purpos'd deed; Mithranes,
Tell me what says report? Does the loud tongue
Of popular invective point at me,
Or does suspicion sleep?

Mith. No rumour yet,

f this, my lord; hath reach'd my watchful ear;
our guards convey'd Cambyses pris'ner hence,
or aught from him has rouz'd the public notice
especting what your thoughts suggest.

Asty. Enough———
etire, my friend.

Mith. Permit me to remind
ly sovereign master, that my son Alcæus——

Asty. I know what thou would'st say——thy son 's
in bonds;
lready have I in my thoughts resolv'd
o set him free, to heap rewards upon him;
ut yet we must beware, it might be dangerous,
t once to pardon him whom all the realm
ust mark for open vengeance; such proceeding
ight give a sanction to whate'er the breath
f discontent might raise against their king.
rust to my care—I 'll watch th' important crisis——
arewell, Mithranes. [*Exit* Mithranes.
O! Astyages!
o what art thou reduc'd! The king's become
he slave of slaves—I now detest the wretch
bservient to my fears, but death shall soon
al up his lips——Alcæus too shall die.
he fate of Cyrus yields a fair pretence——
ut hold—should these by public justice suffer,
must not be—some private hand were best——
ut then Cambyses—yes, he too must fall,
r we are lost—What dire necessity
lunges me deeper still in guilt! one crime

Begets a thousand. Heaven! how is my soul
Bewilder'd in extremes of rage and dread!
I 'm cruel from my fears, and from my cruelty
My fears increase, while one eternal round
Of torture plays the tyrant in my breast.

Enter HARPAGUS.

Harp. Alas! my lord.

Asty. What say'st thou, Harpagus?
Why are those looks of terror?

Harp. Mighty king,
I fear for thee; I fear for Media's safety;
Ev'n majesty itself is not secure.

Asty. Hast thou discover'd aught of treason then
Against our person?

Harp. No—but Cyrus slain,
Alarms each loyal bosom, while his blood
Calls out for vengeance on the murderer's head.

Asty. My friend, hast thou then heard thy king's affliction?
Yes, cruel fate, at one unlook'd-for stroke,
Has robb'd my age of every promis'd comfort.

Harp. O, mockery of grief! but with deceit
Deceit shall be repaid. [*Aside*

Asty. To increase my sorrow,
Justice forbids me to revenge the deed,
And punish on the wretch who murder'd Cyrus,
Th' involuntary crime——the care be thine
To guard him safe 'till we decree his doom.

Enter ASPASIA.

Asp. O, mighty king! behold a prostrate maid,
Imploring grace.

Asty. Aspasia, speak thy guilt.

Harp. What means my daughter? whither can this tend?

Asp. A crime of deeper dye ne'er stain'd a subject;
'T is I 'm the wretched cause of Cyrus' death;
'T is I 'm the wretched cause that Media mourns;
'T is I alone am guilty, not Alcæus:
In my defence, alas! th' ill-fated youth
Was urg'd, unconscious, to the deed—O give
Your royal mercy breath, and spare his life.

Asty. Aspasia, rise; and learn whate'er the motive
That urges thus thy pity for Alcæus,
Though nature loudly plead within my breast
For vengeance on the hand that murder'd Cyrus,
Astyages, unbiass'd by her voice,
Will act as public justice shall determine.

Harp. O, royal hypocrite! but this rash girl
Has wak'd a thought that 'till this hour escap'd
The cautious search of all-discerning age. [*Aside.*
My liege, the prisoner, by his guards conducted,
Is this way bending. [*To* Astyages.

Asty. Let us then behold him,
Though nature at his sight recoil.

Harp. He 's here.

Enter CYRUS *guarded.*

Asty. Say, is this youth the offspring of Mithranes?

Harp. Dread sir, he is.

Asty. He bears a noble aspect;
Those looks erect, that open mien, bespeak not
A lowly birth.—What say'st thou, Harpagus?

Har. Appearance oft deceives: not always does
The polish'd court display the fairest forms;
And in the simple rustic's homely cell,
Nature sometimes assumes a nameless grace,
Which greatness cannot reach.

Asty. Yet, Harpagus,
There's something in those looks that moves me strangely.

Harp. My fears increase. [*Aside.*] Retire, my lord, his presence
But adds to your affliction.

Cyrus. [*Advancing.*] Mighty king,
Ere you depart, permit me thus to approach
With reverend awe; howe'er this erring hand
May call for public vengeance, yet believe
No conscious guilt draws down the stroke of justice
Here then before your sacred feet———

Harp. Forbear———
Intrude not rashly on thy sovereign's grief,
Think who thou art, and what has brought thee hither;
Let it suffice thee in respectful silence
To await the law's decree.

Cyrus. I stand reprov'd,
nd bow me to the justice of the king.
Harp. Still do you pause, my lord, what means this wonder?
hy are your looks thus chang'd?
Asty. I know not why;
feel emotions never known before;
nd my heart melts with sudden tenderness;
leave him to thy care. [*Exit.*
Harp. Again my soul's
t ease—Retire, Aspasia, with the criminal
would be left alone. [Cyrus *walks apart.*
Asp. My dearest father,
e'er you lov'd Aspasia; if the hand
f this Alcæus sav'd her from the rage
f an inhuman spoiler, do not sully
er brave deliverer with the name of guilt.
Harp. Has he not shed the royal blood?
Asp. Alas!
e knew not that the youth he slew was Cyrus.
o guard his life he but repuls'd a force
hat first assail'd.
Harp. No more, but leave me.
Asp. O!
you defend him not, you never lov'd
our poor Aspasia——Think you now behold her
ll pale and trembling in the ruffian's power,
ear her invoking earth and heaven to aid,
ehold Alcæus hasting to her rescue,
nd say, my father, then———

Harp. Take heed, Aspasia,
I fear me something more than gratitude
Is hid beneath this warmth——but mark me well,
Unthinking maid, and hear a father's caution:
Let not imagination raise such hopes
As thou may'st find too late but ill befit
Thy glory, and my own. [*Exit* Aspasia.
Let all depart,
And leave me with the prisoner. [*Guards retire.*
Thanks to Heaven,
I can at length, without constraint, address
My vows to Cyrus, from my prince's hands
Loose these vile manacles——before him bend
The humble knee of loyalty. [*Kneels.*

Cyrus. O! rise.

Harp. Permit me here to pay my earliest tribute;
Be this embrace the first, the sole reward
My truth shall challenge. [*Embraces* Cyrus's *knees.*
Yet forgive me, Cyrus,
If down my cheek unbidden steals a tear,
When I behold that young, that blooming grace,
Spite of my constancy, ideas rise
Of tenderest recollection———I confess
The father here——but hence, ye soft'ning thoughts,
Be witness, Heaven, above my pangs I prize
This interview, though purchas'd with a son.

Cyrus. Rise, my deliverer——and while I thus
Enfold thee in my arms, accept these tears,
The sole returns which gratitude can yield
For all thy suff'rings; but above the rest,

For that unhappy son decreed to fall
An early victim in the cause of Cyrus.

Harp. Let not the sorrows of a subject claim
The tears of royalty.

Cyrus. Does royalty
Exempt the breast from every social tye
That links mankind? Shall kings, my Harpagus,
Forget, that one inspiring breath to life
Awak'd the prince and peasant; and shall he,
The public voice proclaims his people's father,
Not feel those sorrows which his children feel.

Harp. Exalted youth!

Cyrus. Yes, I have heard it all.
Mithranes has unroll'd the secret page
That chronicles thy deeds; there I 've perus'd
All that I owe to thee——and yet, my friend,
When I reflect, that after years of exile,
Cambyses now return'd, is doom'd once more
To ignominious bonds; when I reflect,
These eyes have never yet beheld, these arms
Embrac'd a father——

Harp. But the hour approaches
Shall give thee every wish; as yet the work
Is incomplete, when yon declining sun
Shall guild with feeble rays the temple's summit,
Thy fortune shall assume a brighter aspect.

Cyrus. But still, Mandane,—ever honour'd name,
Still shall she mourn a son's imagin'd fate?
Shall I not see her, Harpagus, and speak
The voice of comfort to a mother's grief?

Harp. Alas! your filial piety o'er leaps
The bounds of cooler prudence—let us then
Be circumspect, my prince; nor in a moment
Destroy the great, the labour'd work of years;
But I must hence, Astyages expects me;
Mean while, retir'd to good Mithranes' dwelling,
Securely wait the great event, which time
Prepares for speedy birth. [*Exit.*

Enter MANDANE.

Cyrus. O! could Mandane
Surmise, that in Alcæus lives———
Mand. This way
They led him to the king. [*Entering.*
Cyrus. What tender sound,
No stranger to these ears——Ha! 't is Mandane.
Mand. It is, it is my son, my only child,
My dear, my long lost Cyrus.
Cyrus. Heavenly powers!
She knows me!
Mad. Turn, O! turn for shelter here
Within these arms—O! wherefore dost thou shun me?
Why fly from my embraces?
Cyrus. Mighty gods!
What shall I answer?———
Mad. Scatter to the winds
Each lingering doubt——I am, I am thy mother——
Does not thy heart confess me?
Cyrus. O! no more,
There is a something here——forgive me, princess,
I dare no longer stay——

Mand. Dost thou avoid me?

Cyrus. Has she not known it all, and shall I still
Distract her bosom thus?——O! never, never,
ince fortune thus compels me—No, my oath
s register'd above——the solemn tye
Mithranes only can release. [*Aside.*

Mand. Go on:
Think with an eager mother's fond attention,
listen to thy words———He hears me not!
Why dost thou hold a converse with thyself?
What means that restless step?—Why is thy speech
Confus'd and broken? Hast thou not been told
That I 'm thy mother? if thou hast, ah! why
Would'st thou estrange thyself? and if till now
Thou knew'st it not, why wilt thou thus receive
A mother's love with coldness? Speak.

Cyrus. My blood
Is all in tumult, ev'ry throbbing pulse
Confesses nature's power.

Mand. Are these the transports
I vainly hop'd! Where are the starting tears
Of mutual fondness? Where the dear embrace,
And the enquiries of impatient love?
This is too much——either thou 'rt not my son,
Or, to complete Mandane's misery,
Nature in thee reverses all her laws.

Cyrus. Yes, I will fly this instant to Mithranes.
[*Going.*

Mand. Wilt thou not speak to me?

Cyrus. Yet, yet a while

Suspend your fond distress till my return. [*Going.*

Mand. But 'ere thou goest, with one poor word relieve
These cruel doubts—art thou, or not, my Cyrus?

Cyrus. Farewell——I can no more——necessity
Compels me now to silence, but when next
We meet, this face shall undisguis'd declare
Th' emotions of my heart, and unreserv'd
These faithful lips pour all my soul before thee. [*Exit.*

Mand. [*Alone.*] What may this mean? Are then my hopes deceiv'd?
It cannot be————yet this mysterious meeting
Gives ev'ry fear th' alarm.—Ye powers! that guard
(If such there are) a mother's peace, remove
These new sprung doubts; and oh! direct my steps,
Lost and bewilder'd in this maze of fate.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

The Wood, &c. MANDANE *alone.*

Mandane.

SUSPENCE, thou cruel state of human sufferings,
Life's deadliest calm!—still, still my thoughts are fix'd
On that dear youth I dare not call my son:
Did he not plight his faith, when next we met,
To ease my soul?——He did—and, hark, he comes,
And every doubt is o'er.

Enter CAMBYSES.

Ha! can it be?
l known form———
landane! O! 't is she,
best treasure! [*Embraces.*
Is it possible!
, do I once again enfold him?
scap'd from bonds? what friendly hand—
messenger from Harpagus o'ertook
d that led me—but some other time
thee all—for, O! I've much to tell thee,
impatient, grudges each delay,
pause of joy.
How hast thou borne
bsence? how return'd again?
thou—but I cannot speak—let this,
embrace, speak where all words must fail—
yet heard our son———
, there, Mandane,
is meeting, while I hold thee thus,
weeps blood———his infancy preserv'd
aten'd death, bred up to ripening manhood,
n to fall a sacrifice at last,
ruffian's rage!———
What means my love?
is true, Mandane might indeed
joy farewell.
a! true, Mandane,
dawn of hope that Cyrus lives?

Mand. Yes, I have been taught to hope, that he who fell
Was an impostor that assum'd his name,
And that the youth who slew him, was our son.

Cam. Confirm it, pitying powers!—but say, Mandane,
Hast thou yet seen this youth?

Mand. 'Twas not long since
He parted from me.

Cam. As I cross'd the wood,
Where yon tall poplar shade the dimpled pool,
I late beheld a youth, whose noble mien
Attracted my regard, I turn'd to gaze,
While with light steps he bounded o'er the turf;
His auburn locks flow'd graceful down his back.
Quick was his piercing eye; his manly shoulders
A spotted tyger's dreadful spoils adorn'd,
Some gallant trophy of his sylvan wars.

Mand. 'T is he, 't is that dear form that holds me now
In torture of suspence.

Cam. But when thou saw'st him,
What said he?

Mand. Little he reply'd to all
My fond address, and when he spoke, the words
Half falter'd on his tongue: his thoughts confus'd,
Seem'd big with something which he fear'd to utter.

Cam. Thy presence might abash a simple swain,
Brought up in woods, unskill'd in courtly phrase;
But who reveal'd to thee his birth?

Mand. Mithranes.

Cam. Ha! did I hear thee right!

Mand. If we may trust
Mithranes' faith, by him was Cyrus bred
As his own son, and call'd by him Alcæus.

Cam. O! treachery forg'd in hell! Detested slaves!
Too credulous Mandane!

Mand. Ah! what means
This frantic rage!

Cam. Alcæus is the assassin
That murder'd wretched Cyrus, the dire blow
Was given by him, and at the king's command.

Mand. What says Cambyses!

Cam. Yes, I heard it all——
When first arriv'd chance led me to the dwelling
Of this accurs'd Mithranes, there conceal'd
I heard the king propose the deed, I heard
Mithranes promise, that his son Alcæus
Should be death's fatal agent---O, Mandane!
Judge what were then my thoughts? rage urg'd me soon
To start from my concealment, when with Mirza
The guards rush'd in, and I was made their prisoner.

Mand. Where, where are now the hopes I vainly fed?
All lost, for ever lost!

Cam. Cyrus is slain,
And slain by this Alcæus——see'st thou not
Mithranes, fearing thy revenge, invents
This tale, to save his son from thy resentment?
Does not the silence now of Harpagus,
Whose loyal truth is known, too well confirm it?

Mand. O! 'tis too plain---Alcæus is the assassin---

Hence his confusion in my sight—for this
He flew from my embraces, and though he came
With purpose to deceive a mother's fondness,
His soul shrunk back, all traitor as he was,
And shudder'd at a thought of so much horror.
Cam. Could'st thou so soon believe——
Mand. Hadst thou, Cambyses,
Heard how Mithranes spoke, while every word
Seem'd the pure dictates of his heart——to this,
A strange emotion that Alcæus rais'd,
Gave sanction to the tale—and add to all,
That what we wish we easily believe.
Cam. Has then delusive hope but lur'd us on,
To plunge us deep in fathomless despair?
Mand. To lead a wretched mother to caress
The murderer of her son---O! my Cambyses,
It is not grief I feel---'tis rage, 'tis madness,——
Cam. Thou shalt be satisfied.
This arm, Mandane, shall revenge---farewell.
Mand. But whither would'st thou go?
Cam. To seek Alcæus,
To pierce his murderous heart---not all the powers
Of earth oppos'd shall save him from my sword:
Where, 'twixt yon steepy hills, th' embow'ring wood
Forms a dark vale, Astarte's fountain flows
With lonely noise; there will I wait, that path
Leads to his home——my fury now is loose,
And when this hand greets thee again, Mandane,
It greets thee with revenge. [*Exit.*
Mand. [*Alone.*] Strike home, Cambyses,

And tell him 't is a mother gives the blow!
What if the traitor should again return?
He comes!—O, Heaven! I shudder at his sight.

Enter CYRUS.

Cyrus. [*Entering.*] Bear, bear me swiftly to her—some kind spirit
Breathe gen.ly on her sense, and bid her wake
To all a parent's rapture——Turn, Mandane,
Behold your son, your now acknowledg'd Cyrus.
Mand. O! most abandon'd slave! [*Aside.*
Cyrus. At length, Mithranes
Consents, that in this wish'd embrace— [*Advancing.*
Mand. Forbear!
And dwells deceit in such a form! [*Aside.*
Cyrus. Ye gods!
How are those features chang'd! what means that glance
Of keen resentment! why am I repuls'd?
Or is it thus I 'm punish'd for my silence
When last we met! What would my mother? Speak.
Mand. The name of mother rives my bleeding heart———
Cyrus. If I 've offended, here I 'll kneel and pray
Forgiveness for my fault—I swear by Mithras,
Whose cheering beam enlightens all, whose eye
Surveys the soul's recess, that while my lips,
Restrain'd by solemn ties, durst not confess
The feelings of a son, warm and alive

To nature's strongest power, my suffering heart
Bled for Mandane's pangs.

Mad. Be still, my rage—— [*Aside.*

There lives not one whose breast more warmly feels
Maternal tenderness——betwixt yon trees
Methought I heard some lurking spies—these woods
Are full of guilt and treason—smiling villain! [*Aside.*

Cyrus. Then let us seek some safer part to vent
These struggling passions—lead me where thou wilt,
I wait thy bidding——or if yet thou fear'st
To come with me might give suspicion birth,
Where shall we meet?——O! say.

Mand. I cannot speak. [*Aside.*

Cyrus. Say, thou wilt follow, and I'll haste to where
Astarte's fountain bathes the neighbouring wood
Of thickest growth; in that sequester'd gloom
No prying eyes shall witness to our meeting
Thy Cyrus there——know'st thou the place?

Mand. I do. [*Impatiently.*

Cyrus. Let me not long expect thee.

Mand. Hence, begone! [*Looking furiously at him.*

Cyrus. Celestial powers——wherefore that dreadful look!

Mand. I would give way——but leave me——

Cyrus. Yes, I'll go;

And while I wait thy coming, ev'ry breeze
Shall seem the murmuring of a mother's voice;
Each little sound shall seem a mother's step,
Stealing to clasp a much-lov'd son. Remember
Astarte's sacred fount—— [*Exit.*

and. [*Alone.*] O, young deceiver!
gone!—What means my heart? Departing hence
eft, methought, a strange emotion here;
spite of all my fury, I confess
feelings of my sex——his graceful mien,
ender speech, his blooming years, excite
luntary pity——wretched mother,
it must she suffer, when she sees her son
gash'd, and bleeding with a thousand wounds—
hence, this vain remorse!—wilt thou, Mandane,
passionate the grief that others feel,
etful of thy own?——no—let him die,
u art a mother too——

Enter ASPASIA.

p. Tell me, Mandane,
w'st thou what fortune yet awaits Alcæus?
does he live? is he absolv'd, or sentenc'd?
and. For pity's sake, name not Alcæus to me,
ears detest the sound—yes, curst Mithranes,
me—inspire me now with direst rage,
venom to my tongue, that every word
plant a dagger in his heart. [*Exit.*
p. [*Alone.*] How shall I learn his fate!—unhappy
youth!
dane's frantic grief—'t is thence I dread
e cruel mischief—but my father comes.

Enter HARPAGUS.

arp. Aspasia, where 's the princess?

Asp. But ev'n now
She went from hence, in all the pangs of sorrow.
Harp. What can this mean? Has she not seen her son?
I fear some mystery. [*Aside.*] Tell me, Aspasia,
Aught said she of Alcæus?
Asp. No, my lord,
But when I ask'd her of his fate—with looks
All pale and wild, she started at the sound,
Then charg'd me never more to name Alcæus,
And vanish'd from my sight.—You seem disturb'd:
Forgive me, sir, if with a daughter's love,
I press too boldly on your private thoughts:
Indeed I am to blame—but yet I fear
All is not well.
Harp. The time is teeming now
With great events, and think not that thy father,
When hopes and fears divide each other's breast,
Can unconcern'd survey the hour decreed,
Perhaps to fix the freedom of his country.
Asp. Ere the glad hour of peace, while dangers rise,
Shall I not tremble for a father's safety?
Cyrus is slain, and by his death deprives
The people of their long expected joy
To hail the kingdom's heir.—Who knows from hence,
What insurrections may be fear'd? the king
Is by his nature cruel, ever feeds
Suspicion in his soul; that oft' incites him
To break the tenderest ties—Did not my brother,
Your lov'd Arsaces, fall an early victim?

Harp. O! my poor boy! here dwells thy fate! and vengeance
Alone can blot it thence. [*Aside.*

Asp. Why, gracious powers!
Was I not steel'd with manly fortitude?
Why throbs this breast with more than female terrors?
O! that a better sex had given me sanction
To share in all your toils!

Harp. No more, my daughter,
The milder fame that waits on passive virtue,
Is woman's boast—but though thy gentle kind
Forbids to mix in the rough scenes of life,
Yet thus far let me tell thee, Harpagus,
From this eventful day, expects to gather
A fruit long planted, that Alcæus———

Asp. Sir! [*With emotion.*

Harp. Be not alarm'd, I see that name has warm'd
The roses in thy cheek. Fear not, my child,
I will not chide thee; no, thou art my joy.
When first with me thou saw'st Mithranes son,
Scarce now three moons elaps'd, thou may'st remember
Thy father's caution———

Asp. And these faithful lips
Have never breath'd his name.

Harp. I know it well———
O! thou art goodness all—and 't is with grief,
With tenderness I speak—but yet, Aspasia,
There is a cause—if thou regard'st thy peace,
If thou regard'st a parent's will, expunge

A passion from thy soul, which ere the sun
Descends, may whelm thee in despair.

Enter MIRZA.

Mirza. The king,
My lord, requires your presence. [*Exit*

Harp. I attend him:
Farewell, Aspasia, and remember—— [*Exit*

Asp. [*Alone.*] O!
I see, I see it all—remorseless love,
In every day of my succeeding life,
Plants the sharp thorns of sorrow—still, my father,
I will obey thee: yes, I will contend
Against this fatal passion; yet forgive me
If all is vain, at least the smother'd flame
Shall burn within, and if I cannot cease
To love, I can resolve to be unhappy. [*Ex*

SCENE II.

The Grove before the Dwelling of Mithranes. *Ent*
MITHRANES, *and* MANDANE.

Mand. There needs no more, Mithranes, I conf
thee
A mirror of unsully'd truth—proceed
No further in thy tale—I know already
What thou hast done for Cyrus, and Cambyses
Knows it not less—Invention has been rack'd
How to reward thy worth—perfidious slave! [*Asi*

the recompence that 's giv'n, will ever
of thy desert—yet what is done,
seem little in Mandane's eyes,
, when he hears, may find too much.
What means Mandane? wherefore speak'st
ience and merits?. by yon heaven,
horrs the mercenary sounds!
: my duty to my prince fulfill'd,
; all reward—this humble garb
ot the mind: thou know'st in me
eds are voluntary, that I chose
his life of rustic solitude,
what still I boast, this breast unstain'd,
r prove what thou would'st seem to think me.
Gods!. Can he thus dissemble? [*Aside.*
Thou hast started
t that calls a blush to these old cheeks,
igs my honest services.
Forgive me,
nfess the warmth of gratitude
ted me too far: I know full well
xalted minds, their deeds alone
reward: and he who can attain,
ast done, the sovereign height of virtue,
within himself, tranquillity
less pleasure, that in part resembles
of the immortals—speak, Mithranes,
i not prov'd such happiness?
I have;
d I change it for a thousand worlds.

Mand. I can no longer hold—detested villain?
Thou murderous traitor! monster!
Mith. Say'st thou, princess!
Speak'st thou to me!
Mand. To thee—and could'st thou think
Thy frauds would be conceal'd? and didst thou hope
Thou wretch, that for my own, I should have clas
Thy son in my embraces——no, perfidious.
I am not yet so hateful to the gods.
I 've lost my Cyrus, but I 'm not to learn
By what curs'd means—I know by whom he fell,
And can and will revenge it.
Mith. What distraction.
What cruel error clouds your reason?
Man. Peace.
And mark me well—now tremble if thou canst——
Know that this instant, while I speak, thy son
Gasps for his latest breath.
Mith. What say'st thou? ha!
Mand. Know too, thou wretch, 't was I, 't wa
deceiv'd
And sent him to his fate.
Mith. Thou! Heavenly powers.
Mand. Now see if thou hast ought to hope, the pl
Is far remov'd from help, and he who there
Awaits him, is—Cambyses.
Mith. Ah! Mandane,
What hast thou done? O! haste! at least discover
The fatal place.
Mand. Indeed—so might'st thou come

To intercept my vengeance—thou shalt know it,
But not till it is drench'd with blood, the blood
Of thy lov'd son, Alcæus.

Mith. Princess, yet
Have pity on yourself, he whom you think
Alcæus, is your Cyrus—is your son.

Mand. Hope not again to cheat my easy faith.

Mith. Gape earth, and swallow these time-wither'd limbs;
Heaven's swiftest light'nings strike this hoary head,
If what I speak be false.

Mand. Vain imprecations—
Familiar to the wicked—where 's the wretch,
Harden'd like thee, who fears with impious tongue
To invoke the gods to falsehood?

Mith. Grant but this.
While here I 'm kept in bonds, haste thou, prevent
The horrid deed, and if I then deceive you,
Return and vent on me your keenest rage;
Tear this old breast by piece-meal, for each hour
I' ve dragg'd this wretched life, invent a pang,
'Till cruelty herself shall stand aghast.

Mand. O, subtle hypocrite! but naught avails thee;
I see thy purpose; driven to this extreme,
At least thou would'st suspend the blow—thou know'st
I have no friend to trust, and thou may'st hope
The king mean time may hear, and bring thee aid.

Mith. What shall I do? Instruct me, gracious powers
O, my poor prince!—Unhappy, fruitless cares.

Have I then toil'd my age for this.——Mandane,
I here again adjure each pitying god,
In witness to this truth——the feign'd Alcæus
Is Cyrus——is your son——run, quickly save him;
Yet, yet believe me——If thou dost mistrust
This agony of grief, thou wilt become
An object hateful to the world, and all
Thy future days shall be despair and horror.

Mand. Rave on, for I enjoy it.

Mith. Mighty gods!
Do these white hairs deserve so little faith?
These furrows fill'd with tears——

Mand. 'T is all in vain——
Those pangs but speak the parent—yes, barbarian,
Such is the state to which I am reduc'd
By thee—and such Cambyses feels——'t is now
Thy turn to prove what 't is to loose a son.

Mith. Blind, wretched mortals! that too oft exult
When misery hovers o'er them—Speak, Mandane,
Say, where is Cyrus?—thou wilt speak, but O!
'T will then be found too late!

Mand. Avaunt, thou traitor!
Hope not to shake my purpose.

Mith. Do I wake!
Where am I? ha! what darkness gathers round me!
Tell me, inhuman!—Why too cruel gods!
Am I reserv'd for this—still art thou silent!
O! let me fly—but whither? Some kind power
Direct my steps—'t is all in vain—behold!
He dies!—O save him, save him! [*Runs off.*

Harp. [*Within.*] I've sought him; but in vain!

Mand. Sure 't is the voice of Harpagus.

Enter HARPAGUS.

Harp. Mandane,
In happy time—hast thou beheld Alcæus?
Unless we find him, all our hopes are air.

Mand. Is this the purport of thy search—be calm,
I can inform thee of him.

Harp. Thanks to Heaven!
Direct me to him—he must now be brought
Before the people—nothing more remains
But to produce him———

Mand. O! too generous friend!
I see thy aim, thou would'st appease my vengeance
With public punishment——I thank thy zeal,
But 't is too late, already has Mandane
Obtain'd revenge———

Harp. Revenge! on whom?

Mand. On him who murder'd Cyrus.

Harp. Speak'st thou of Alcæus?

Mand. I do.

Harp. What means Mandane? has thy rage
Attempted aught against him?—O! take heed,
Thou tread'st a precipice.

Mand. Ha!

Harp. Know'st thou not
Alcæus is thy son?

Mand. My son!—O heaven!
Speak this again———

Harp. Doubt not the truth—Alcæus
And Cyrus are but one.

Mand. O! all ye host above, assist me! [*Going.*

Harp. Whither?
Hear me, Mandane———

Mand. Let us fly, I cannot———
Cold, cold, my heart———

Harp. What means the deadly paleness
That steals upon thy cheek? the fatal dews
Of death are on thee, and thy trembling knees
Totter beneath their burden. [Mandane *sinks down.*

Mand. Harpagus,
Fly to Astarte's fountain——save my son;
Perhaps he yet may live.

Harp. What says Mandane?
Astarte's fountain.

Mand. Linger not a moment,
Even now he dies, and by a father's hand!

Harp. Almighty powers! [*Runs off.*

Mand. [*alone.*] O, most accurs'd Mandane!
What fiend possess'd thy senses, when Mithranes
Too truly spoke—and is there then no glimpse
Of hope?—O! none! all, all conspires to banish
The least kind doubt—these eyes beheld my son,
I heard his lips pronounce a mother's name,
My heart confess'd th' emotions of a parent;
And yet—[*rising.*] methinks even now I see him, now
His voice is in my ears!—with what reluctance
He parted from me—O! my child! as if
His heart presag'd his fate---and I---distraction!——

O horror! horror! hark, my husband calls!
He kneels! that angel form! those pleading looks!
Strike not---it is---it is---O! mercy, heaven! [*Exit.*

ACT V. SCENE I.

Another part of the Wood. MANDANE *alone.*

WHERE am I wandering! this way leads, but whither?
Hold, hold, my brain!—down, down, my busy thoughts,
All recollection 's madness---there a train
Of horrid images crowd thick upon me!
Yon bubbling fountain streams with blood---I tread
On mangled limbs---what noise was that---a groan!

Enter MITHRANES.

Mith. Wearied with fruitless search, methought but now,
I heard the sound of wild distress———Mandane!
Mand. Ha! what art thou? [*Wildly.*
Mith. O! tell me where is Cyrus?
Does he yet live?
Mand. Who dares to speak of Cyrus? [*Raving.*
Is 't thou—take heed---we are observ'd---look there!
See where he comes, all pale and bleeding! ha!
Why do'st thou turn those piteous eyes upon me!
Come, come, my son—nay, pry'thee do not shun me!
Thy mother will no more betray thee—

Mith. Break,
Break my too stubborn heart—have comfort.
Mand. Comfort!
Curs'd be the tongue that speaks again of comfort.
Snatch me, ye whirlwinds, to some yawning gulph,
Let my remembrance perish, lest for me
Each son should execrate a mother's name.
Mith. What shall I say to sooth her? speak, Mandane,
'T is your Mithranes, your old faithful——
Mand. Ha!
I know thee now—thou'rt Heaven's vicegerent, sent
To judge, and to condemn me——
Thou strict inquisitor of crimes, before
Whose great tribunal—see yon dreadful witness!
At length it is done—and I am sentenc'd!—Oh!——
Where have I been?—Mithranes!— [*Recovers.*
Mith. How fares, Mandane?
Mand. Harpagus has cur'd me
With all the horrid truth, and now he 's gone
To save my son; but, O! I fear too late!
Mith. Then yet there's hope—
Mand. Haste to Astarte's fountain,
There death displays his terrors! [*Exit* Mith.
Pitying gods! [*Kneels.*
In this short interval of sense, O! hear
A mother's anguish; save him, save my child;
Strike from his breast the lifted steal, nor curse
With a son's blood, a father's erring hand! [*Rises.*
And now methinks some gentle spirit whispers,
Mandane, yet have hope—eternal justice

Can never fail—my Cyrus lives—he lives!
And I shall once again embrace—but hark!
What hasty steps!—ha! 't is Cambyses! horror!
'T is done, 't is done—— [*Swoons.*

Enter CAMBYSES, *his Sword drawn and bloody.*

Cam. My soul! Mandane! speak—she hears me not,
Senseless and cold—but see, life gently breathes
Through her pale icy lips—direct me, Heaven,
How to recall her wandering spirits home.

Enter CYRUS.

Cyrus. 'T is she, O! let me gently steal upon her,
Nor give her tender soul too soon the alarm!

Cam. Gods! is not that the murderer of my son?
[*Turning.*

Cyrus. My mother pale and breathless! [*Advancing.*

Cam. Pass no further,
Art thou not call'd Alcæus? speak.

Cyrus. I am.

Cam. My wife!
Look up, behold your wish'd revenge compleated
By your Cambyses' hand. [*Attacks* Cyrus.

Cyrus. Yet stay—O! heavens!
Tell me—art thou Cambyses?

Cam. Yes, thou wretch!
I am Cambyses—die——

Cyrus. My dearest father!
Defer your rage——first know me for your son,
Then plunge your weapon here, I will not shrink,
But bare my breast to meet the blow. [Kneels.

Mand. Where am I!
Ha! is it possible! what means that form!
[*Raising herself.*
Cam. And shall I listen to his soothing tale,
All false as hell—no—perish. [*Attacks* Cyrus.
Mand. Hold, Cambyses! [*Interposing.*
Thou kill'st thy son!
Cam. Ha! kill my son! [*Drops his sword.*
Mand. My child! [*Embracing* Cyrus.
And do I clasp thee thus! it is too much.
Cyrus. And do I now embrace a mother's knees?
And does she own me too?
Cam. Amazement! speak,
Mandane, do I dream? Can this be Cyrus?
Mand. O! yes—it is my Cyrus—gracious Heaven
That snatch'd him from a father's rage!
Cyrus. My father! [*Kneels.*
Cam. Rise to my arms, my son! [*embraces.*] how is my soul
Perplex'd amidst these strange events—Mithranes—
Mand. Mithranes still is true—but say, what blood
Distain'd thy sword? didst thou not wait but now
With dreadful purpose?
Cam. No---ere I had reach'd
The appointed place, Mirza by chance assail'd me
With a few scatter'd guards; I wounded some,
Then under favour of the shelter'd wood
Escap'd from their pursuit; and hence the blood
That wak'd thy terrors.
Cyrus. At the sacred fount,

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aited long, till Harpagus appear'd,
clos'd a wondrous tale, and bade me fly
ease a mother's anguish.

Enter MITHRANES.

Mand. O! Mithranes,
hat blest events!
Mith. The time admits not, princess,
lon g congratulations---Harpagus
s told me all; the hour of sacrifice
now at hand; my prince, retire awhile;
ou too, Cambyses, for this way the king
es to the temple.
Mand. Must we part so soon?
Cyrus. But for a time---farewell---lead, good Mithranes. [*Exeunt* Cyrus *and* Mithranes.

Enter ASTYAGES *and* MIRZA *behind.*

Mand. And wilt thou leave me too?
Cam. Mourn not, my love,
hen next we meet, we meet in happier hour,
part no more.
Asty. Mirza, 't is true---but hold,
t us observe awhile.
Cam. Yes, my Mandane,
ice Cyrus lives—
Asty. What do I hear? [*Aside.*
Cam. His fortune
all be our constant theme.---Heaven that preserv'd,
is surely form'd him for a life of glory;

But I must hence, farewell. [*Goi*

Asty. Cambyses, stay. [*Coming forwa*

Man. O heavens the king!

Asty. Let not my presence check
Your rising joys, I came to share them with you;
Disclose the wondrous truth: what pious care
Bred up his youth? where is he now conceal'd?
Not speak---Mandane---does my daughter too
Refuse this satisfaction to a parent?
Since then the father mildly pleads in vain,
The king shall force obedience---seize Cambyses---
[*Guards enter and seize hi*

Enter HARPAGUS.

Harp. Astyages, [*In bas*
Thou art betray'd---haste---stop the kindling tumu
Thy presence only can prevent.——

Asty. What mean'st thou?
Whence this new alarm?

Harp. The rumour spreads
That Cyrus lives, that now he 's at the temple,
All thither run with speed, to see and swear
Allegiance to him, while the madding crowds,
With general voice exclaim, 'Cyrus is king!
'Cyrus still lives, Astyages shall die.'

Asty. Perfidious slaves!---is this the secret then
Your breasts conceal'd? [*To* Cambyses *and* Mandan
But henceforth I 'll forget
All ties of blood, both perish by this hand,
The victims of my just resentment. [*Draw*

Hold,
--if it be true that Cyrus lives,
his parents still, as hostages
/ secure his faith.
Thou counsell'st well;
hem hence: Mirza, the charge be thine
l them in my tent; come, Harpagus,
ıs prove the worst; but if we fall,
ıot fall alone,
Assist me now, [*Aside.*
ns of revenge; nerve this good arm,
ant, if thou canst, escape my toils.
ceunt Astyages *and* Harpagus *on one side, and*
Cambyses *and* Mandane *on the other, guarded.*

SCENE II.

Grove before the Dwelling of Mithranes.

CYRUS *alone.*

a little, and thy fortune, Cyrus,
ık upon the light; perhaps this instant
ı the discovery---teach me, Heaven!
:his burst of dignity---but now
inmate of these woods; and now
of Media's empire! humble merit
ılcæus---narrow bounds prescrib'd
l duties, but the soul of Cyrus
to nobler views; a prince's virtues

Are not confin'd to private life, but grasp
The happiness of millions.

Enter ASPASIA.

Asp. Haste, Alcæus,
Haste, and partake the general transport! Cyrus
Yet lives, again he's found, the wretch who fell
By thee, usurp'd his title.

Cyrus. Fair Aspasia,
How know'st thou this?

Asp. There is no room for doubt:
These plains re-echo nothing now but Cyrus. [*Shout.*
Hark! how applauding shouts proclaim their rapture!
Some scatter flowers, or round their temples bind
The festive wreaths, with tears of gratitude
Some pay their thanks to heaven: from rural toil
This drags his fellow; in the unfinish'd furrow
Here rests the share; there roves, without their shepherd,
The flock forsaken: mothers, wild with joy,
Teach their young sons to lisp the name of Cyrus;
Even age forgets its feeble state; and children,
Taught by example, though they know not why,
With infant prattle join the common voice.

Enter MITHRANES *and* Guards.

Mith. Let us to the temple,
My Prince, these guards by Harpagus are sent
For your defence---come then, and with your presence,
Ease your impatient friends.

Cyrus. Is then my fate
Already publish'd?

All is now proclaim'd,
Harpagus has, by undoubted proofs,
your birth.
Didst thou not wish, Aspasia,
on Cyrus? now thou may'st behold him,
Cyrus.
Ha!
Why droops Aspasia?
not joy in my success, or does
that trembled for Alcæus' danger,
Cyrus' fortune?
pardon, sir,
maid, nor wonder that the blush
ids my cheek, when I reflect, for me
reign's life expos'd.——
Rise, fair Aspasia,
w the daughter of my Harpagus,
fence may justly claim that life
r's truth preserv'd.

Enter Messenger.

Dispatch, my son---
comes here? whence art thou?
From the temple,
l is tumult and dismay; the king,
ss'd by a rebel band, is threaten'd
edy death---
Swift let us fly to save him:
r the errors of Astyages,

His kindred blood flows through the veins of Cyrus,
Andna ture shudders at a parent's danger---
Away, my friends! farewell, farewell, Aspasia!

ASPASIA *alone.*

Alcæus---Cyrus!---O! that fatal thought,
My father too---did I not hear ev'n now,
Of tumult and revolt---amidst the waste
Of rebels rage, where death wings ev'ry shaft,
Who knows what perils may surround his life?
Then let me fly, and intercept with mine,
The point that threats the breast of Harpagus!
Or shall he fall? which all ye powers avert,
At least partake his fate, and die beside him!

[*Exeunt* Cyrus, Mithranes, *and Guards.*

SCENE III.

Outside View of a magnificent Temple. Clashing of swords; ASTYAGES *his sword drawn;* HARPAGUS *enters.*

Asty. O! perjur'd traitors! where is now the faith,
You vow'd your king? do all forsake my cause?
No, some shall yet be found---what, Harpagus,
Thou com'st in time to give thy sovereign aid;
Thy loyal sword---

Harp. Tyrant, thou art deceiv'd,
Know, 't is by me thou fall'st.

Asty. By thee?—confusion!
Is this thy faith?

What faith was due from him,
n thy fury murder'd? long, too long
breast has borne the smother'd anguish;
it bursts to vengeance; and this hour
l retribution---blood for blood!
lissembling traitor!
Tis not now a time
in vain debate---this to thy heart,
ny poor Arsaces! [*Fight.*
Hold, my people! [*Within.*
e transports you? 't is your Cyrus calls,
the king---where is Astyages?

r CYRUS, *his sword drawn, attended.*

T is then too late---turn, villain---
[*Goes to kill* Harpagus, *who turns to him.*
!---
t thou done!---
ıast stain'd my infancy of glory,
posterity will brand the name
, that to ascend the Median throne,
through that sacred blood---my king!
ur eyes, behold your Cyrus here.
ay, what art thou?---O! I have wander'd
ong
ss—now, methinks, the scene is drawn;
ı, that great remembrancer, calls forth
ıd black ideas---who art thou?
Your Cyrus, Mandane's Cyrus.
ırt thou

Indeed my Cyrus? art thou he whose life
My cruelty pursu'd?---but heaven is just;
Astyages shall be no longer fear'd---
Cyrus to thee, as to Mandane's offspring,
My crown shall now descend---my dearest son,
Be warn'd by me---still venerate the gods,
And with thy glory veil the shame of---oh! [D

Cyrus. There fled the royal spirit.——

Harp. Forgive me, prince, howe'er resentment ur
This hand against Astyages, my faith
To thee has been unshaken—witness, Heaven,
I die, and die with joy; since I behold
Cyrus restor'd to Media. [Si

Cyrus. Ha! thou faint'st!

Harp. Yes, generous youth!—thou need'st not s
revenge
For what this arm has done—ere I had reach'd
Astyages, his weapon pierc'd my breast,
And mark'd me for the shades—this deed of death
Was mine alone—to none my soul imparted
Her pre-conceiv'd revenge; then with me die
Remembrance of it---yet there's something more--
I have a daughter---O! I faint!---if aught
I may implore of Cyrus, let her find
Protection———oh! [L

Cyrus. Thou most unhappy man!
Why was thy life thus clos'd, that Cyrus scarce
Without a crime can pay the grateful sorrows
Thy merit claims---

Enter CAMBYSES, MANDANE, *and* MITHRANES.

Mand. Alas! alas! my father!

[*Runs to* Astyages, *and kneels by him.*

Cyrus. Cambyses and Mandane here!

Cam. Amidst
The rising tumult now, a chosen troop
Of friends assail'd the royal tent, when Mirza
Was slain, and we were freed.

Mand. Then he is gone---
His faults sink with him to the grave---farewell,
Farewell for ever---my remembrance now
Looks back but on those happy years, when all
A father's fondness watch'd his darling child---
These tributary tears---

Cam. Awake, Mandane,
To better scenes---the tempest that so long
Has blacken'd round us, shall be now dispell'd,
And days of peace succeed.

Mith. See where Aspasia, [*Looking out.*
Frantic with grief, breaks through the pitying crowd,
And seeks for Harpagus.

Cyrus. Unhappy fair one,
Look to the lovely mourner---thou, Mandane,
Wilt sooth her orphan sorrows.---

Cam. Droop not, son,
But rouse the latent hero; think from thee
What fate exacts; on thee what nations turn
Their long-desiring eyes.——

The blessings of my sway, that every age
May learn to venerate the name of Cyrus!

EPILOGUE.

Written by a Friend, and spoken by Mrs. YATES.

WELL, here I am—thank heaven! no more Mandane—
Among ourselves this bard is but a Zany.
Says I—when first he offer'd me the part,
I hope 't is nature—level'd at the heart!
Says he—a husband thought far off to roam;
Disguis'd, and unexpectedly comes home.
A son returns, lost twenty years, d'ye see,
To call you mother, though not thirty-three.
This (I reply'd) will do, if I can guess;
For this, indeed, is natural distress—
Distress! (he cry'd) you quite mistake the thing;
Astyages you 'll find—had dreamt—the king—
I stop'd him short—perhaps it may be true,
That your old nature differs from your new.
From various causes equal sorrows flow,
All realms and times have some peculiar woe:
With us what griefs from ills domestic rise,
When now a beau—and now a monkey dies!
In this our iron age, still harder lot,
A masquerade, no ticket to be got—

Your obsolete distress may now be told—
Let 's see—there's ravishing—that 's very old.
There 's love that scorns a title and estate——
These woes of love are vastly out of date!
Then there 's your martyr to his country's weal—
What strange distress these antients us'd to feel!
The love of country now, indeed, runs high;
They prove its value most, who dearest buy;
Think what our patriots pay in sterling gold,
A single borough for seven years to hold.
Though here in statu quo *I still remain,*
I 've oft been married, ravish'd, crown'd and slain!
None of all these have been my fate to-night,
So us'd to fancy'd anguish and delight;
Yet let me hope you felt the part I bore,
Give me your plaudit—we can wish no more.

THE END.

CLEONICE,

PRINCESS OF BITHYNIA.

A

TRAGEDY,

BY JOHN HOOLE, ESQ.

ADAPTED FOR

THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOK,

By Permission of the Manager.

: Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation.

LONDON:

Printed for the Proprietors, under the Direction of
JOHN BELL, British Library, STRAND,
Bookseller to His Royal Highness the PRINCE of WALES

MDCCXCV.

TO

MRS. VERELST,

AS A

SINCERE MARK OF RESPECT,

THIS TRAGEDY

IS

DEDICATED,

BY HER MOST OBEDIENT,

HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author will not here trouble the Public with a detail of the difficulties through which this Tragedy of Cleonice *has struggled to make its appearance. He cannot, however, suppress his singular obligations to Mrs.* Hartley, *who most readily undertook the part of Cleonice, which she has continued to support, with unremitted assiduity and friendly alacrity, amidst the repeated attacks of severe indisposition.*

Shire-Lane,
11th March, 1775.

PROLOGUE.

Written by T. VAUGHAN, Esq.---Spoken by Mr. BENSLEY.

TELL me, ye gods, ye arbiters of wit,
Who rule the heavens, or who lead the pit,
[Addressing the gallery and pit.
Whence comes it, in an age refin'd by taste,
By science polish'd, and by judgment chaste,
We see the muse, in dignity sublime,
Led on by prologue, ape-ing pantomime?
Whose sportive fancy, and whose comic skill,
All must applaud—where Roscius *guides the quill;*
Yet when Melpomene *in grief appears,*
Her suff'ring virtue bath'd in sorrow's tears,
From tyrant laws, or jealous love oppress'd,
Swelling with silence in her tortur'd breast,
How can the heart her genial impulse shew,
Feel as she feels, or weep another's woe;
When gay Thalia *has so late possess'd*
The laughing transports of the human breast?
Let each her province keep, let jocund mirth
To Epilogue alone give happy birth;
Ease the struck soul from ev'ry anxious fear,
And wipe from beauty's cheek the silent tear.

Twice Metastasio's *wings have borne our bayes,*
And safely brought him o'er the critic seas;

Fir'd with success, he dares this awful night,
Cheer'd by your smiles to take a bolder flight;
Nor longer stoop beneath a foreign shade,
Like Dian shining from a borrow'd aid;
But comes impregnate with Icarian *pride,*
To stretch his pinions, and forsake his guide;
Yet doubtful flies, lest vapours damp his force,
And one black cloud should stop his airy course,
To awful heights his proud ambition soars,
And the dread regions of applause explores;
No sun he fears—but courts its warmest ray,
'Tis yours to raise—or sink him in the sea.

Let Candour *then proceed to try the cause,*
That Magna Charta *of dramatic laws!*

PROLOGUE.

by a Friend, to have been spoken in the character of the Tragic Muse.

Designed for Mrs. BARRY.

ES of genius! from whose hands a bard
ght awaits the laurel of reward!
the Tragic Muse, in Britain's *name,*
announce the merits of his claim.
ave led him timorous to this field,
le him dare his country's gauntlet wield;
m aspire to vault her fiery breed,
ably stoop to mount the manag'd steed.
d I seen his patient merit toil,
g chaplets from a foreign soil;
here, transplanted by his skilful hand,
honours bloom'd in Albion's *land.*
d I mark'd, as such exotic boughs
be wove to veil his modest brows,
that in paths untrod before
natch the nobler foilage of this shore.
with the hopes, that I had now descry'd
son, from whom the buskin's pride
ny favourite isle, again might rise;
his ear, and pointed out the prize.---
my honours in this clime (I said)
ere no bounteous leaf to deck thy head?

'Are these once fostering skies so over-cast,
'That genius dares not brave th' inclement blast?
'Come, let me lead thee, where my sons of yore
'In fancy's fields amass'd their laureate store:
'With active powers, aloft, bestrode the clouds
'Inspir'd by kind acclaims of shouting crowds.
'Turn thee, where Shakspere wav'd the mystic rod,
'And saw a new creation wait his nod.
'Behold where terror, with eccentric stride,
'Bursts, like a torrent from the mountain's side!
'Behold where gentle pity heaves the sigh,
'Sluicing the fruitful conduit of the eye!
'See love, at whose approach, the airy wiles
'Of mirth and freedom, or the jocund smiles
'Of sweet content, dispers'd in wild affright,
'Mount on their silken wings and take their flight.
'See jealousy his hideous form uprear,
'Tine the quick brand, and shake the vengeful spear:
'While, close behind, fell anguish and disdain
'Stalk sullen by, and swell his gloomy train.
'Mark where despair points to some distant ground,
'On blasted yews, where night-birds shriek around,
'Where yawning tombs add horror to the night,
'And meteors flash their momentary light.
'Here mark thyself, what various objects rise,
'Nor trust the medium of another's eyes.'

I spoke—and genius strait began to spread
His ready plumage, and my voice obey'd,
Adventurous, thence, he dares this night aspire
To stamp the vivid scene with native fire.

'Tis yours, ye Britons, then, with kind applause,
To fan the flame I kindled in your cause:
Nor be it said, when on your mercy thrown,
You foster every spark, but what's your own.
From your dread sentence, crown'd with laurels won,
I ardently expect to greet a son:
The palm I have deposited with you,
And trust your hearts to give it where 't is due.

Dramatis Personæ.

COVENT GARDEN.

		Men.
ARTABASUS, King of Pontus,	-	Mr. Barry.
PHARNACES, his son, under the name of Arsetes,	-	Mr. Lewis.
LYCOMEDES, King of Bithynia.	-	Mr. Bensley.
ORONTES, Prince of the blood of Bithynia,	-	Mr. Lee.
TERAMENES, General of Bithynia,	-	Mr. Hull.
AGENOR, Friend to Orontes,	-	Mr. Whitefield.
ZOPYRUS, Friend to Orontes,	-	Mr. L'Estrange.
Officer,	-	Mr. Thompson.
		Women.
CLEONICE, daughter to Lycomedes,	-	Mrs. Hartley.
ARSINOE, daughter to Teramenes,	-	Mrs. Morton.

Guards, Attendants, &c.

SCENE, a city on the frontiers of Bithynia, and the country adjacent.

CLEONICE.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A Gallery.—Enter TERAMENES, AGENOR.

Teramenes.

AGENOR, still Bithynia must retain
The sword unsheath'd, and still remov'd afar,
Shall peace, in vain desir'd, mock every hope
Of dear domestic happiness—the leagues
Of factious princes, whose associate force
Has vex'd this bleeding land, now yield indeed
To Lycomedes' arms, or rather shrink
Before the genius of your noble friend.

Age. Arsetes, bred in distant realms, and long
A wanderer o'er the face of earth, must hail
The hour that led his steps to tread your soil,
And gave him Teramenes for his friend.

Tera. Though now the rage of civil strife is past,
Full well thou know'st, to-morrow's sun declin'd,
His next returning beam lights up the day

That ends the truce with Pontus, and demands
Our strongest force to meet a mightier foe,
In Artabasus.

Age. Five returning suns
Have chang'd your vernal groves, since as the breath
Of Fame declares, your armies met and fought
On Hippias' banks, what time your martial powers
(Forgive me, if report mislead my tongue)
Bow'd to a foreign standard.

Tera. Lycomedes,
Whose thirst of glory in his vigorous life
Compell'd the neighbouring states to bend beneath
Bithynia's yoke; when creeping time had clogg'd
The vital springs, and kept his age from scenes
Of active valour, by his generals still
Maintain'd the field, and through the nations spread
His martial terrors, till that fatal day,
When Hippias, down his current, dy'd with blood,
The frequent corse and glittering ensign bore:
Then, midst the slaughter, fell a sacrifice
To iron war, our king's lamented son;
A youth, the early darling of his sire,
The soldier's hope, and nursling of the field.

Age. Oft have I heard Polemon's name, whose brave
Unpractis'd arm encounter'd Artabasus,
And from his sword received a glorious death.

Tera. But though the time's necessity compell'd
Bithynia to the truce, still, still the thought
Of his Polemon rankled in the bosom

Of our afflicted monarch, still the hope,
Though distant hope of vengeance, glow'd within,
And fed eternal hatred in his soul.
While now to Pontus' bounds, his army spreads
It's conquering legions, he forgoes the state
Of Nicomedias' palace, to reside
Amidst this city, whose opposing bulwarks
Rise on the kingdom's edge, and dare the foe.

Age. Fame speaks your rival great, and gives the praise,
Of might and wisdom to the king of Pontus;
And more, 'tis said, his son, amidst the files
Of Rome's immortal legions, distant far
From Pontus, learns the rugged trade of war,
And gathers laurels in his blooming age,
That veterans view with envy: his return
Gives earnest of new triumphs.

Tera. Let him come;
Would yet Arsetes aid Bithynia's cause,
His sword, with brave Orontes join'd, whose hand
Must sway th' scepter of Bithynia's realm,
Might fix th' unsteady wing of victory
To Lycomedes' bands.

Age. Orontes' valour
Your sovereign deems to merit Cleonice,
Whose piety forsakes the pomp of courts,
The splendid ease of female life, to attend
A father's steps, amidst the clang of war.
But for Arsetes, thou rememberest well,
When first he join'd to thine his social arms,

He pledg'd his faith for five returning moons
To abide your welcome guest, and now the tenth
Wanes in her silver orb.

Tera. What says Agenor?
My mind, though loth, recalls each circumstance.
But still I hop'd Arsetes might be won
To breathe our friendly air, still mix'd among
Bithynia's warlike sons, now hov'ring o'er
The verge of hostile Pontus, when the time
And place concurr'd, to pour with sudden inroad
The storm of conquest on our hated foe,
To avenge a form, a worth so like his own——
——But see, he comes——

Enter ARSETES.

Belov'd Arsetes, welcome!
Youth, at thy presence, buds with bloom renew'd,
Such as I was, when, on Arabia's sands,
I crush'd the wandering robbers of the desert.

Arse. My lord, too partial friendship ever finds
New praise for your Arsetes; if I claim
Of merit aught, here Heaven receive my thanks,
That bade me wield the sword for Lycomedes.

Tera. And yet Arsetes now methinks forgets
To prize our country's honours; while the bond
Of friendship holds no more his changing heart;
That heart, which once I press'd with transport here,
Which seem'd with mutual transport to receive
The love I proffer'd, when my bosom glow'd
With warmth of gratitude to him, whose arm

Snatch'd Teramenes from impending death,
As fierce Lysippus aim'd the threatening blade
At my defenceless head, when you rush'd in,
(Till then unknown) and sav'd me from the foe.

Arse. 'T was sure some happy star, that led my steps
At that blest moment—if I sav'd the life
Of Teramenes, I preserv'd indeed
A faithful counsellor for Lycomedes,
An army's chief, but for myself a friend.

Tera. And wilt thou, my Arsetes, now forsake
The bands, that late pursued the glorious task
Of conquest, taught by thee—now when the great,
Th' important moment comes, on which depends
Our monarch's fame, our vengeance—led by thee
And brave Orontes, we have stemm'd the tide
Of inbred tumult: every rebel head
Now lies subdued, and flush'd with great success,
Our soldiers now demand, with loud acclaim,
To pour their fury o'er yon hostile bounds,
Beneath Arsetes and Orontes.

Ars. Heaven
Be witness here, compulsive honour long
Has challeng'd my departure—yet, till now,
I wav'd obedience to the frequent calls
Of duty; but the flame of civil broils
At length subsiding through your troubled state,
I must (forgive me, chief, forgive me, friend)
Yield to the powerful voice, and quit Bithynia.
By every toil my sword has known in battle,
But most the toils I shar'd with Teramenes,

Unwilling and compell'd, I leave your clime,
And quit a country dearer than my own.

Tera. Farewell, Arsetes; think that Teramenes,
Feels from his inmost soul the fix'd resolve
Of him, whom once he fondly deem'd by fortune,
From all mankind selected for his friend.
I 'll seek the king, no less will he regret
Arsetes' loss, whose presence might insure
His wish'd revenge, and fix his kingdom's glory. [*Exit.*

Age. Why droops Arsetes? O! discover all
Thy secret grief, and let Agenor share it.

Arse. Indeed thou dost—my every thought is thine,
My other self, my bosom's counsellor!
What needs there more to rend my heart, to fill
My tortur'd soul, while loitering here I wrong
My native soil, the voice of filial duty
Chides my delay, yet love, the powerful god
Reigns in my breast, and mocks each settled purpose:
Come, my Agenor, with thy friendly aid
Confirm my thoughts, and teach me yet to tread,
Yet to resume the path my feet have left;
To quit the land where all my joys are center'd,
To tear myself from love and Cleonice———
——O! never!——never———

Age. Yet again reflect,
Think what you are, to what has Heaven reserv'd
Your virtues—Shall a kingdom's heir———

Arse. Go on——
'T is honest chiding—Shall a kingdom's heir,
(Thus would'st thou say) on whom th' expecting eyes

Of thousands look for happiness, on whom
A father fixes every dearest hope
To see himself renew'd to distant times,
Shall he, forgetting all the claims of glory,
Forgetting all the ties of filial duty,
Defrauds his longing people of their prince,
And from his sire with-hold a darling son?
Say—shall Bithynia's hostile lands detain,
From Artabasus' sight his lov'd Pharnaces?
O! no—Agenor—thou has fir'd my soul!
My father!—yes, I will embrace the knees
Of him, whose love reproaches my delay.
Yet never, Cleonice, shall this breast
Forget its wonted flame:—Is it a crime
To adore the sum of all her sex's graces,
Though wayward chance has plac'd the hopeless bar
Of lineal enmity between our loves?

Age. And yet, my prince; the indulgent hand of fate,
Perchance may weave your future web of life
With threads of brighter dye; even love itself
May find a way to clear the gloomy prospect:
Discord perhaps may once again extinguish
Her hated torch that fires the rival nations,
And Cleonice be the bond of peace:
Too long, already, strangers have we lived,
Alien from friends and home: though Artabasus
Sent you beneath my father's guardian care,
To learn hard lessons in the school of glory,
Yet sure the parent suffer'd in that absence,

Which, as a king, his virtue deem'd would raise
Your fame, and fit you for a people's weal.

Arse. Yes, my Agenor, oft his tenderest greetings
Have warn'd me to return, when circling time
Had brought the period fix'd for my departure;
Or when the pause of arms, or honour's duty
Permitted me to quit the host of Rome.

Age. And yet—my prince—

Arse. And yet—too true, Agenor,
I feel each just reproach—the land indeed
I left, and journey'd o'er a length of soil,
When fate (for sure 't was more than common fortune)
Prompted my steps to tread Bithynia's realm,
Where Lycomedes wag'd intestine war
With rebel arms.

Age. Thy generous valour then,
Warm'd by the common cause of kings, to assert
A prince's rights, forgot thy country's foe.

Arse. Full well thou know'st I vow'd to every God,
By all the solemn ties that bind mankind,
Ne'er to reveal, while in this hostile land
My country, or my birth; this urg'd by thee,
I swore, when first I told thee my design,
To gaze on Cleonice's wondrous charms.

Age. Nor vain the caution—think, O think, how far
It yet imports to keep the mighty secret:
Alas! my friend I tremble, had your father
Been conscious whether fortune led the steps
Of his Pharnaces; could he know the land
Of Lycomedes now detains his son——

Th' idea starts a thousand fears: should now
Some dreadful chance betray you to the foe;
I shudder at the thought—then let us hence,
And to the longing troops of Pontus give
A blooming hero, promis'd oft in vain:
Then let us hasten---by my father's shade
I now adjure you—for Pharnaces once
Rever'd his Tiridates———

Arse. Witness, Heaven,
How dear I held him!—Artabasus only
Could claim a nearer duty o'er my heart,
The guide, the great example of my youth!
Methinks I now recall the fatal day
That snatch'd him from us—O, my lov'd Agenor!
The scene is present to my eyes——I see
The battle rang'd, when to my ardent gaze
His hand experienc'd pointed out the files
Of rigid war; and taught me where to drive
The thunder of the field; when Heaven so will'd,
A distant arrow sent with deadly aim,
Pierc'd his brave breast———

Age. Then midst the distant fight,
It was not given Agenor's hand to close,
A dying parent's eyes———

Arse. These arms receiv'd
The venerable chief—'Take, take,' (he cry'd)
'This last embrace—still let the dear remembrance
'Of Tiridates' counsels move his prince,
'And, for my sake, be kind to my Agenor.'——
He could no more, but left in thee his pledge

Of truth and amity—since which my soul
Has held thee ever partner of her fame,
Her better half, her other Tiridates! [*Embrace.*

Age. I am indeed thy Tiridates—yes,
My father, from thy seats of bliss and peace,
See, how thy prince rewards thy loyal faith,
And, in his love, supplies a parent's loss——
And yet, forgive me, prince, thy words awake
Remembrance of that day for ever mourn'd!——
—— My father——

Arse. Go, Agenor, since my last
Resolves are fix'd—provide whate'er requires
To quit this court—to quit my Cleonice,
Though death is in the thought!——thy piety
Reproaches mine—ere yet the mounting sun
Whose early ray now gilds the face of morn,
Attain his mid-day seat, the camp of Pontus
Shall see Pharnaces and Agenor. [*Exit* Agenor.

Arse. [*Alone.*] Yet
Be still, my beating heart—O, Cleonice!
I feel her now---Instruct me every God
In soothing speech!---O, teach my lips to breathe
In gentle sounds, the fatal word---farewell!
———Orontes here!---and is not this the blest,
The destin'd husband of my Cleonice———
I shall relapse—for if I think---distraction
Ensues, and fame and peace are lost for ever! [*Exit.*

Enter ORONTES.

Oro. Sure 't was Arsetes! that malignant planet,

That thwarts my course, whene'er my fiery soul
Would, eagle-wing'd, stretch her aspiring flight,
He soars above me still—Have I not worn
The mask of loyal faith, smooth'd o'er the dark
The sullen brow of deep design, with smiles
My heart confess'd not?---What have I not done,
For thee Ambition!---Let not pale Remembrance
Review the past, or paint a scene to stagger
The sickly resolution---deeds long done,
That sleep secure from every mortal ken,
Are but as shadows in the coward eye
Of conscience---Hence!---Orontes' soul disdains
The phantoms of remorse.———

Enter ZOPYRUS.

Now, my Zopyrus——
Speak; hast thou aught that claims my ear?
Zop. I learn
That the young stranger who so deeply witch'd
The madding multitude, prepares this day
To leave Bithynia's court.
Oro. It cannot be———
Arsetes!——speak—what at this fated time,
When war again unfolds his brazen portals,
And Pontus brings to view its crested thousands;
A tempting prospect yet untry'd, to prove
His sword———It cannot be!
Zop. This hour Agenor
Declar'd Arsetes's purpose.
Oro. Speed it, gods!
Come near, Zopyrus, to thy faithful ear

I 've oft disclos'd the secrets of my heart,
Where Love, but most Ambition holds his sway.
This stranger is my bane—I shrink beneath
His better genius——even the field that once
Crown'd this good sword with honours, yields me now
But wither'd laurels, which his brow disdains;
While the blind herd on him, with full-mouth'd clamour,
Lavish their shouts.

Zop. Yet fortune has secur'd
Your brightest hopes—has not our king declar'd
Orontes, next by birth, ascends the throne?
Have not the assembled states confirm'd the right
Of just succession? hastening on the steep
Of downward life, our king, though high in spirit,
Blazing with wasting light, that soon must fail,
Shall sudden sink to night, and leave to thee
A glorious rising to imperial greatness!
Fair Cleonice too shall bless your bed,
And with her beauty smooth the toils of empire.

Oro. 'T is true, the charms of Cleonice well
Might claim the tongue of rapture—yet Zopyrus,
While great Ambition's sun lights up my flame,
The star of Love looks sickly at his beams.

Zop. What more can crown your wish, when Happiness,
In all your soul aspires to, soon shall open
Her welcome arms—Mean-time the king, my lord,
Esteems, and holds you high above the rank
Of Nicomedia's nobles.

Oro. True, Zopyrus;
Spite of the tardy warmth of cautious age
I've work'd me deep in Lycomedes' soul,
By more than common zeal to avenge his son.
But home-bred faction, spreading through the land,
Compell'd us to the hated truce with Pontus:
Till now, nine moons elaps'd, this upstart chief
Stept in, to bear away the prize of arms
Due to my elder sword, while Teramenes
With partial eye beheld his every deed,
And idoliz'd the work himself had rais'd.

Zop. Yet common rumour speaks that friendship holds
In strongest bands Orontes and Arsetes.

Oro. Even so, my friend——and policy demands
That he who runs the mingled race of life,
Should learn to veil himself, and oft appear
The thing he is not——

Zop. Should propitious fortune
Remove your rival hence———

Oro. If this report
Be true, the dark eclipse that late has frown'd,
No more, my friend, shall intercept my fame;
The war's great field, at this auspicious time
Begun, shall not enrich a stranger's hand,
But fall the harvest of Orontes' sword. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II. SCENE I.

A Garden, with Palm-trees, Olives, and other Eastern Plants. Enter CLEONICE.

Cleonice.

ALAS! it will not be! and fond remembrance
In vain recalls the past——where, where is now
That reason's boast, which o'er creation lifts
The pride of man, when fickle as the gale
That sweeps the blossom from the bough, our passions
Veer with each hour, and shake our best resolves?
How is my bosom chang'd!—no longer now,
From my example, mother's teach the young
And tender maid, who dreads each swelling wave
That heaves but gently o'er the stream of life,
To rise superior to her sex's weakness!——

Enter ARSINOE.

Arsi. Friend of my life, whose partial choice has given
Arsinoe long the privilege to pass
The ceremonious bounds, which birth and title
Had plac'd between us, wherefore art thou chang'd
From her that lov'd, and lov'd but her Arsinoe?

Cleo. Still art thou here the partner of my heart:
Then wherefore this reproach? and why complain
Of change that never yet this breast has known?

We were two plants that grew in friendship's soil,
And promis'd fruits of never-dying love.

Arsi. Then every care that Cleonice knew
Arsinoe too has shar'd—but late I 've mark'd
That Cleonice, different from herself,
Shuns even Arsinoe's presence, ever seeks
The lone recess, and brooding o'er her thoughts,
Nurses some hidden grief——soon war again
Shall loose its rage——perhaps the threatening danger
Alarms your fear.

Cleo. Thou know'st that I alone
Remain'd the comfort of a father's age,
When fate, that tore Polemon from the hope
Of his Bithynia, from a husband's arms
A hapless consort sever'd, thou remember'st,
My mother, sad Arete, bow'd with grief,
Soon mix'd her ashes with the son's she mourn'd:
Then, left in early youth, my converse oft
Sooth'd a fond parent's pangs, when recollection
Rais'd up the form of blessings lost for ever!
While, as I grew, paternal fondness saw
With partial eye his Cleonice's mind
Expand beyond her sex: hence not alone,
The soft, the winning talents, that to life
Give female polish, but the greater arts
Ennobling man were taught my ripening age.
But, o'er the rest, my sire, whose bosom glow'd
T' avenge his son, enur'd my thoughts to cherish
Deep hatred of the foe by whom he fell.

Arsi. Hatred and vengeance ill agree, my friend,

With tender grief like thine—estrang'd from all
Thy wonted temper, solitude bespeaks
Far other change—Then seek not to deceive
The searching eye of friendship.

Cleo. Alas! Arsinoe,
I feel the woman here——thou said'st but now
That war again must soon unloose its rage:
Is there no cause for fear? whate'er the tongue
Of stoic fortitude may boast, the mind,
The generous mind that owns life's dearest ties,
Will nourish feelings pride disdains to own.

Arsi. Revolve our present state, our country's sword,
Now us'd to victory, gives high expectance
Of future triumphs, while for you, my friend,
If love, if grandeur charm, Bithynia's throne
Shall raise you high, and Hymen light his torch
At Cupid's flame——Is not the first of men,
The first of heroes, yours? Yes, Cleonice,
Each anxious doubt shall fleet like morning mist,
And all be lost in your Orontes' arms.

Cleo. Orontes' arms!——O, Heaven! what have I said!
By every tie of love———But whither---whither
Now rove my thoughts! Leave, leave me, my Arsinoe,
To brood in secret o'er my treasur'd sorrows.

Arsi. Scarce from her tenth fair crescent has the moon
Silver'd night's fleecy robe, since I 've beheld,
Though silent, I 've beheld thy altered mien;
Methinks e'er since the day, when 'midst the ranks

Of rebel arms my father 'scap'd with life,
Sav'd by the gallant aid of brave Arsetes.———
Ha!---thou art pale-- and now the mantling blood
Returns once more---What can this mean?---My heart
Has caught the alarm, and, Oh! my soul forebodes
Distress and anguish to my hopeless love. [*Aside.*

Cleo. It must be so——hence every vain respect!
I can no more dissemble——Hear, Arsinoe,
Hear then, and pity Cleonice's weakness!
While Lycomedes, with a monarch's care,
Plans future schemes of greatness---Cleonice,
Lost to herself, her rank, her sex's glory,
Dotes on the merits of a youth unknown!

Arsi. Orontes then———

Cleo. Orontes!——name him not———
I own his worth—I own the sacred rights
A king and father claim———but I must own,
Though while I speak, confusion fills my soul,
Arsetes bears down all; and though the pride
Of fortune rais'd me high above his hopes,
A pleader here, which nothing could withstand,
By looks, by deeds, by all that can ennoble
The pride of youthful manhood, had prepar'd
My easy bosom to receive the guest,
That now, sole tyrant, reigns my bosom's lord!

Arsi. Then am I lost indeed! [*Aside.*

Cleo. Go, my Arsinoe,
And learn if aught is rumour'd that pertains
To my Arsetes:---soon this favour'd hero
Will leave Bithynia's court---but still remember

Veil'd in thy faithful breast to keep my secret:
To thee I trust my life, my fame, my all! [*Exit* Arsi.

Cleo. [*Alone.*] Lost and bewilder'd still I rove in fate's
Distressful labyrinth---Why, Cleonice,
Why didst thou leave the shore of calm indifference,
To launch upon the dangerous sea of love?

Enter LYCOMEDES, *and* TERAMENES.

Lycom. This day, my Cleonice, surely dawns
With happiest omens---He, whose valiant arm,
Join'd with Orontes, quell'd our rebel sons;
To whom the public voice gave every suffrage
Of grateful tribute, threaten'd to forsake
Our realm, and bear to other climes his sword.
But Teramenes, who with counsel sage
For ever watches o'er his country's weal,
Has found the happy means to fix him here,
To graft his virtues on Bithynia's stock,
Blest earnest of revenge!

Cleo. What means my father? [*Aside.*
My lord the duty Cleonice owes
Her country's welfare, and her father's honour,
Demands my thanks for every aid that Heaven
Gives to Bithynia's strength---and sure, Arsetes
Stands first in martial praise---But say, my father,
What happy means has Teramenes found
To fix him yours?

Lycom. Such means as oft have dealt
Destruction on mankind: what oft has drawn

The sword of violence, may now secure
A nation's fame and vengeance---Yes, whate'er
Arsetes' race or country, beauty's charms
Insure his future service.---Fair Arsinoe,
Thy virtuous friend, shall bind her native land
In grateful thanks for such a hero's valour.
Our friend, our Teramenes, joins to his
Arsinoe's hand, and gives, in such a son,
A great ally in Lycomedes' cause.
Led by Orontes' and Arsetes' valour,
What may Bithynia's squadrons not atchieve?

Cleo. [*Aside.*] Support me, Heaven! [*To* Ter.]---
sir, I confess the virtues
Of my Arsinoe, and her beauty's charms:
Permit me yet to ask you, if Arsetes
Has e'er reveal'd———Perhaps some distant fair,
Whose love and beauty had possess'd his soul,
Impels him to forsake Bithynia's court.

Tera. No, princess---if this judgment, not unskill'd
In human kind, can read the thoughts of men,
He loves Arsinoe: late have I observ'd
His bosom labouring with the stifled passion,
Of recent birth; and well I know my daughter
Owns, with a virgin blush, Arsetes' virtues:
Nor could a youth, whose fortune only rests
In his own merits and his sword, refuse
That hand which Nicomedia's noblest peers
With transport would receive.

Lyc. Why droops my daughter?
Still cherish hope; a train of better days

Each nice respect of honour, made my name
To future times the scorn of every tongue,
That fathers to their sons might point the example,
And bid them fear to fall as fell Pharnaces!
Even she, my friend, has now with cruel scorn,
Repaid my love———

Age. O, sir, forgive Agenor;
But sure in pity fate concurs even here
To hasten your resolves—whate'er the cause
Of Cleonice's anger, every moment
Is wing'd with peril—think what foes conspire
Against your father's peace, his life and fame.

Arse. No more, no more, Agenor—best of friends,
In thee thy father Tiridates speaks.
Pharnaces! still thou shalt retrieve thy glory,
Burst from the veil of dark obscurity
And blaze in virtues beam—But yet, Agenor!
O, yet induge a heart that sinks beneath
Accumulated anguish—can I leave
My Cleonice thus—alas! who knows
How soon, by rash resentment urg'd, her hand
May to Orontes yield her plighted faith!
While absent hence Pharnaces.———

Age. Wilt thou then linger here, unmindful still
Of fame and Artabasus?

Arse. No—this night,
Be witness every power! we leave the court—
This only day indulge a lover's fondness!
The care be thine that Artabasus soon
Receive this signet, with the welcome news

That his Pharnaces, his expected son,
Will join, ere yet they reach the bounds of Pontus,
His native bands,—there, kneeling at his feet,
Implore forgiveness—in this interval
Of fate and love, these lips shall once again
Assail with every soothing eloquence
The cruel Cleonice; then, Agenor,
To Artabasus will I open all
My secret heart—perhaps some future day
(O, busy hope!) may give me undisguis'd
To plead my cause before her, when my sighs
Shall in her breast revive the tender flame,
And love with endless rapture crown Pharnaces!

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.

A Gallery. Enter LYCOMEDES *and* TERAMENES.

Lyco. How stand the soldiers' hopes, my Teramenes?
What spirit breathes among their ranks, to give
A presage of the war?

Tera. The troops on fire,
Demand alone Orontes and Arsetes;
With loud reproach they execrate the foe,
And hail with joy the near expiring truce.

Lyc. Yes, Teramenes—civil discord now,
That sheathes her sword, has left revenge to rear
Her dreadful banner—Nemesis has heard
Our solemn vows against exulting Pontus,

No more Polemon's ghost shall haunt my dreams,
Arsetes and Orontes shall extend
My name to latest times; the glorious love
Of empire and of arms, that fir'd my youth,
Shall warm my frozen age—too long compell'd
I smother'd in my breast the flame of hatred;
But when my soul forgets thy loss, Polemon,
Disgrace and ruin o'er these silver locks
Shed their black influence!—Orontes, welcome;
What hear'st thou of the foe?

Enter ORONTES.

Oro. Not unprepar'd
The king of Pontus, from Heraclea's walls,
Has drawn the choicest sons of valour forth,
That lie encamp'd beside Parthenius' stream.

Tera. 'T is said they wait the arrival of Pharnaces,
(The kingdom's hope) whom Artabasus sent,
What time Bithynia sign'd the truce with Pontus,
To distant Rome to train his youth in arms,
And Fame, with loudest tongue, proclaims his praise.

Lyc. A stripling when he left his father's court?

Tera. He was; and now scarce twenty suns have ripened
Our fruitful years, since Artabasus gain'd
By him a parent's name.——

Lyc. Such as he is—
O, scorpion memory! such perhaps had been
Bithynia's heir and Lycomedes' son!
O, Teramenes! O, Orontes! pity

A father's feelings---Thou, Orontes, saw'st
My hapless boy---thy pious arms embrac'd
My lost Polemon, as life's gushing stream
Sprinkled his budding laurels---where was then
A father's vengeful sword, while to his tent
You bore him pale and senseless, distant far,
Detain'd by coward age, these ears receiv'd
The dreadful tidings, when his frantic mother
Ended her wretched being---Powerful Jove!
Shed from thy bitter urn the dregs of anguish
On my poor span of life, withhold each comfort
Which creeping years, o'erwhelm'd with sorrow, claim,
If I forgive the cruel hand that cropt
This blooming plant, which else had flourish'd now
And shelter'd with his shade my wasting age!

Oro. Soon shall we lead th' embattled squadrons forth
On Artabasus---should this boasted son
Return, though conquest-plum'd, he comes perhaps
A fated victim---

Lyc. O! that thought, Orontes,
Gives vigour to my nerves!---Ye powers of vengeance!
Hear, hear a father's voice, and through his son,
Reach Artabasus's heart, that after years
Of tedious expectation, now at length
Return'd and scarcely welcom'd, he may fall
A dreadful sacrifice---then through the sense,
The thrilling sense of fond parental love,
By his Pharnaces let him know the pangs
Of Lycomedes, when Polemon fell! [*Exeunt.*

ACT III. SCENE I.

A private Apartment.---Enter CLEONICE *and* ARSINOE.

Cleonice.

TALK not of comfort---'t is in vain, Arsinoe;
Arsetes leaves us---my relentless scorn,
Impell'd by frantic jealousy, the madness
Of woman's love, drives from Bithynia's court
The first of warriors: his right hand, that still
Held Victory captive, now to happier realms
Shall bear his fortune and his fame---the sun
That rises on the war shall see our troops
Pale and dismay'd for their Arsetes lost.
Who knows the event?---the same declining sun
May blush upon Bithynia's shame, and guild
With favouring rays the tents of Artabasus,
May smile upon his arms; while Lycomedes
Curses each day that wider spreads his shame.

Arsi. Alas! my friend, your warmth of temper frames
The gloomiest prospects of imagin'd terror——
Though fortune now may frown——

Cleo. Thee too, Arsinoe,
Thee have I wrong'd——forgive thy Cleonice---
Art thou to blame, if, fram'd for gentlest passions,
Thy breast, the seat of innocence and love,
Confest the manly beauties of Arsetes,
Not bound by cruel ties of fame or duty?
Rouze, rouze, my feeble virtue---yes, I feel

New strength, and should Arsetes yet remain---
I think, Arsinoe---Heaven support the thought!
I think---I could resolve to yield him to thee---
But see, thy father——

Enter TERAMENES.

Tera. All the hopes we form'd
To keep Arsetes here, dissolve in air:
Thus oft, presumptuous man too fondly grasps
Ideal good: the hero, whom we deem'd
Secur'd by every tie, declines the hand
By Hymen given, endow'd with wealth and honours;
While candour blushes on his modest cheek,
He owns Arsinoe's virtues, owns the fate
That now forbids him to receive her love,
Or longer to remain Bithynia's guest.

Cleo. Still art thou true, Arsetes!

Tera. My Arsinoe,
Why heaves thy bosom?---Still our guardian gods
We trust will smile.

Arsi. My lord, Arsinoe stands
Prepar'd for all---be witness, Heaven! how oft
I check'd each flattering hope: forgive, my father,
The involuntary sigh! perhaps the last
The fruitless effort of expiring passion!

Tera. Call up the thoughts that suit thy sex and rank:
Time shall, with lenient hand, relieve thy anguish,
Thy princess, with the gracious warmth of friendship
Shall shed the balm of comfort in thy wounds:
---Still art thou sad!---permit me, Cleonice,

Awhile retir'd, with dear paternal counsels,
To arm her tender breast, that peace again
May chase despair, and ease an anxious father.
[*Exit with* Arsinoe.

Cleo. [*Alone.*] Though my heart joys to find Arsetes true,
Still am I wretched——yet again methinks,
Fain would I once again behold that face
Where love, where faith!---but O! 't is madness all!
Doom'd to Orontes, when the lonely hour
Invites to shades of sorrow, tyrant duty
Makes even my grief a crime---but let me still,
Let me once more, while yet without reproach
I may indulge the sight, behold Arsetes,
Take the last sad adieu---and like a wretch
That shivers on the precipice of fate,
Enjoy the parting glimpse of peace and happiness,
Then sink at once to misery and Orontes. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

A Hall.—Enter LYCOMEDES, TERAMENES, *and* ORONTES.

Lyc. The gods have heard our vows, my Teramenes,
Ere yet the night ascends, to Pontus' camp
Pharnaces will return; even now we heard
From certain tidings, that the prince's signet
Receiv'd by Artabasus, had confirm'd
His near approach---

Tera. My liege, the enemy
Will feel new vigour from the expected sight
Of young Pharnaces---ere a few short days
Are past, th' advancing troops by Arcas led
Will join our arms; united then, our bands
May rush to certain conquest.

Oro. Teramenes,
Forgive me, if my soul revolts from counsels
Which frigid prudence dictates—shall we then
Remain inglorious, skulk within our walls,
To wait uncertain aid—permit the foe
To gather strength and courage from the presence
Of this Pharnaces?—O! forbid it, virtue!
That virtue which has fired Bithynia's sons
To glorious conquest and extended sway!

Lyc. My empire's hope! on whose succeeding reign
Sits expectation: this Pharnaces still
Turns every scale of fight; his towering spirit,
Enthusiast of the battle, looks with scorn
On vulgar honours.—

Oro. To this boasted hero,
Deck'd in his foreign triumphs, send the trump
Of stern defiance, that Pharnaces' arm
May meet with mine before the camp, and give
A glorious opening to the morn of war!

Lyc. —'T is nobly utter'd—thy impatient sword
May find employment—to the hostile camp
A herald shall to-morrow bear our challenge
To this Pharnaces, in the listed field
Next day to engage in single fight, the champion

Bithynia's king shall send—but since the life
Of my Orontes on the great event
Suspended hangs—to thine six warriors more
Shall join their dauntless names.

Oro. Let instant lots
Decide the combatant; or rather fix,
Without the chance of lots, Orontes' sword,
Which here he tenders, vowing from Pharnaces
To tear his recent spoils, and to the manes
Of your Polemon shed his life, or fall
Himself a victim, happy in the applause
Of his lov'd sovereign, and his country's tears.

Enter ARSETES.

Arse. Permit me, sir, since time, with rapid wing
Now mocks my stay, to waken your remembrance,
That call'd by fate to other ties which honour,
Which duty must enforce, Arsetes now
Prepares to leave the court, reluctant leave
That court, where Lycomedes' royal hand
Sheds lavish honours on his poor desert.

Lyc. Yet ere thou goest, thy valour that has long
Sustain'd our arms, may add one labour more;
For still methinks, Arsetes, would my soul
Detain thee here; but fate, I know not why,
In thee from Lycomedes tears a hero,
Whom next Orontes he esteem'd his son;
This very now, ere thy arrival here,
A challenge was decreed to dare Pharnaces
To single fight—Orontes, 'midst the list

Of noble candidates for fame, demands
The glorious peril, let us add to these
Arsetes' name, and instant lots decide
The champion fated on his venturous sword
To bear Bithynia's vengeance———
Arse. [*Aside.*] Ha! what means
My wayward destiny!
Oro. Behold the champion
Thy choice selects—see, Lycomedes, see,
Suspense is on his brow—Is this the man
Whose arms so oft———
Arse. Yes, 't is the man, Orontes!
Who fought Bithynia's battles, he whose force——
But I am calm—No, Lycomedes, think not
I shrink from honour's trial—should the lot
Bring forth Arsetes' name—believe me, sir,
Whate'er Pharnaces—I alone perhaps
Am doom'd his victor, when the world shall own
That what Pharnaces was, is then Arsetes.
Lyc. Enough, enough;—thy zeal, Orontes, here
Prompts thee too far; nor thou, Arsetes, heed
Orontes' eager warmth—to dare beyond
The level of mankind, and bravely reach
At virtue's height, is all that human firmness
Can boast her own——Success, enthron'd above,
Beyond a mortal's power, by Heaven alone
Commissioned, crowns the deed—now let us hence—
The lots once drawn, soon as the fated morn
Ascends the steep to gild the turret's height,

Our knight shall wait the signal.

[*Exeunt* Lyr. Ter. *and* Oron.

Arse. [*Alone.*] Deity
Of blind events!—say, whither wouldst thou lead
Pharnaces now?—yet let me once again
Behold my Cleonice, then forsake
This fatal realm, no more a feign'd ally
To tread with hostile step Bithynia's court.

Enter CLEONICE.

She comes—once more 't is given me to address
My Cleonice—'midst surrounding perils
Yet happy, if I once again can pour
My soul's full anguish here———

Cleo. Alas! Arsetes,
What shall I say, how speak my bosom's tumult!
I fear too much I wrong'd thee; though our fate
Can ne'er unite us, yet I feel my heart
Will never cast Arsetes from the throne
Where Love hath placed him.——

Arse. O! thou most unkind!
What had I done to merit!—when my soul
With anguish bled———

Cleo. Alas! I thought thee false,
And though I knew thou never could'st be mine,
I could not bear another should receive
That love, which once I deem'd was mine alone.

Arse. Another, Cleonice! is there then
Amidst the blooming circle of your sex

De Wilde pinxt. Audinet sculp.

M.r LEWIS as PHARNACES.

Phar. Oh! thou most unkind.

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A maid whose charms——what treacherous tongue
has dar'd
Traduce my faith?———

Cleo. The king and Teramenes
Declar'd your purpose to espouse Arsinoe;
Fir'd at the thought, my rash ungovern'd temper——
Thou know'st the rest.———

Arse. Forbear, I know too much:
For this, thou could'st unheard condemn the man
That lives not but in thee; bid the same breath
That warm'd my love to rapture, like a frost,
Nip every blossom of my future hopes!——
Thou never lov'dst———

Cleo. Then wherefore am I wretched?
Unjust Arsetes! give me back, ye powers,
That blest indifference, when as yet this pulse
Had never learnt to beat, these nerves to tremble
With fear, suspense, with all the nameless train
That banish peace for ever——In Orontes
I viewed a prince, to whom paternal care
Had pledg'd my nuptials; till a stranger's virtues
Drove every thought from Cleonice's breast
Of interest or ambition—still remember
I will—I would retain the inbred dignity
That suits the daughter of Bithynia's king.———
Enough, Arsetes, that my soul has stoop'd
To own her weakness—yet since cruel Fate
Forbids our union, when thy heart selects
Another love, may every happiness
That crowns the fondest pair———

Arse. O! never, never!
This bosom traitor to its first———
Cleo. The king——

Enter LYCOMEDES.

Lyco. Well dost thou honour here the man whose sword
May turn the tide of victory—my daughter,
Behold Arsetes, now decreed to meet
In combat with Pharnaces—know, the lots
Of fate are drawn; our fame is in thy hands;
Thou art our champion.
Arse. Since the will of destiny
Seals me thy warrior; till the morn dissolves
The truce with Pontus, let me from the court
Awhile retire, on something that concerns
My weal, my honour—when the blush of dawn
Shall strike the altar on the forest's edge
To Mars devoted, there thy guard shall find
A champion arm'd to meet Bithynia's foe,
If Artabasus' son accept the war.
Lyco. Till then the hours be all thy own——Nor claims
Bithynia, or Bithynia's king, from thee
But what befits thy honour—should success
Attend our hero's arms, these walls shall ring
With joyful pæans, and to crown the day
With jubilee, the day that sets us free
From such a foe, Orontes to the altar
Shall lead his Cleonice; and the garlands

Of Hymen's triumphs mingle with the palms
Which victory displays—The important hour
Demands my counsel hence—till next we meet,
Farewell—and should Pharnaces, sway'd by virtue,
Accept our challenge—may Polemon's death
Sit on thy lance—a mother's grief and death
Edge thy keen faulchion, and a father's sufferings
Infuse new spirit in the day of fight,
That every eye may view with tears of transport
Arsetes' laurels and Bithynia's glory! [*Exit.*

Cleo. [*Pauses.*] Yet is there more! O, no! my fate has long
Frown'd in the distant prospect—now the vision
Draws near, and misery with rapid speed
Rides on the advancing hour—thy life, Arsetes,
Expos'd to peril in to-morrow's field,
Excites each fear—for thee my prayers shall pierce
Jove's awful throne; yet must thy victory
Doom me a wretch for ever—led to grace
Thy triumph in Orontes' hated bands!
Yet be it so—fate, honour, virtue, all
Demand this sacrifice!—and should the event
Of battle crown thee with the victor's wreath,
And still Bithynia's vows detain thee here,
Arsinoe be thy bright, thy dear reward——
She loves thee, my Arsetes—yes—O, Heaven!
Why do I weep—let her bestow that happiness
Which Cleonice never————

Arse. Still thou know'st not
What fate has yet reserv'd—the ensuing combat

May clear a mystery, which till now compell'd
My bleeding heart had kept from all—from thee!
Then by each past, now hopeless hour of love,
Still cherish in thy breast the gentle flame
Arsetes kindled, till the expected sun
Sets on the battle's fate; our fate perhaps
Hangs on the equal balance—Cleonice
Will ne'er refuse these moments to Arsetes:
Thou know'st not what I feel for thee, my soul
Labours beneath a load of secret anguish:
While danger, ambush'd in a thousand forms,
Waits every step, and threats my way with ruin.

Cleo. Thou hast prevail'd, Arsetes; and whate'er
The fateful birth that waits to be disclosed,
My love shall hope the event——

Arse. The day declines,
And warns me hence——

Cleo. O, Heaven! we meet no more
Till that eventful time! yet go, Arsetes;
Go whither glory calls—Hear, every power!
Raise o'er his head the buckler of defence,
Pluck from the hostile hand the nerve of strength,
And bring him victor home—nor let a tear
From Cleonice stain the hour that gives
Bithynia safety, and Arsetes fame! [*Exit.*

Arse. [*Alone.*] Methinks my pulse more quickly beats, and all
My spirits rouse, as nearer to the goal
Verges my fate.

Enter AGENOR.

Arse. Agenor!

Age. O, my friend!
Reflect what perils hover round; some God
(Forgive me, prince!) that frowns upon our rashness,
Has form'd the labyrinth that threatens now——
This combat by the king propos'd———

Arse. O, wherefore
Did not Orontes mark the champion's lot,
Then Fate, perhaps——But yet my friend, this fight,
This mystic fight, may work some means to unravel
The knot of destiny—The hour now presses;
The herald soon will seek my father's camp.

Age. Then let us hence!—The war-like troops of Pontus
Impatient wait to see their prince return;
Whose glories won in distant climes, attract
Each listening ear, while every soldier, warm
With expectation, pants to view that face
Where Mars propitious in life's opening prime,
With youthful graces blends the victor's smile———
Your father too———

Arse. I feel, I feel it here!
The godlike, virtuous ardor! yes, Agenor,
My soul is up in arms—methinks I see
Good Artabasus darting through the ranks
His ardent looks—methinks I hear him chide,
With fond paternal warmth, his tardy son.
Now, on his reverend cheek, where age begins

To shed its silver honours, stands the tear
Of tenderness, while all the parent longs
To see those features ripening into manhood,
Which last he viewed in early bloom——I hear
The shout of charging hosts! the neigh of steeds!
The battle joins, and no Pharnaces there!
Now danger stalks around, and Artabasus——
Distracting thought! fly, fly, my best Agenor,
Fly to redeem our fame, and save a father! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Another Apartment. Enter ORONTES *and* ZOPYRUS.

Zop. Compose yourself, my lord.

Oro. Zopyrus, never———
Was it for this I deem'd his absence near,
And now behold him with Orontes join'd
In glory's list—nay more, by partial fortune
Declar'd Bithynia's champion! Should he fall,
He leaves a name in arms to cope with mine!———
But should he conquer! Hell is in that thought?
Who knows, Zopyrus!—whither may the king's
Too partial views incline?—The kingdom freed
From such a foe—Polemon's death reveng'd——
He may, perhaps, forget—The crown, Zopyrus,
That mistress of my soul, to which ambition
Points every aim, may grace a stranger's brow!

Zop. What says Orontes?

Oro. This right arm might reach

His life—but policy forbids my hatred
To blaze abroad—The many blindly dote
On him they scarcely know——Zopyrus, speak,
Art thou my friend?

Zop. Hold—let me think—Orontes
Bears not the coward's scruples——there is yet
Perhaps a way——

Oro. Pause not, but speak——

Zop. 'Tis here————
Arsetes must not live——Give but the word,
He dies, and dies ere he can meet Pharnaces!

Oro. But how?

Zop. Thou know'st that I command the guard
To escort Arsetes from the fane of Mars
To meet Pharnaces; from a desperate band,
The power of gold, and vast reward, shall single
A chosen few, that at a signal given
Shall rid your soul of every fear in him:
And more, to blind suspicion's eye, their arms,
Their vests shall seem of Pontus' troops: the deed
Effected once, the ensuing fight shall see
These tools of our great enterprize expos'd
Full in the front of slaughter, that in heat
Of onset they may fall, and in their fall
Mock all discovery.

Oro. Come to my breast!
By Heaven it ripens well——Then, when he 's dead,
We lead the troops to well-feign'd vengeance!—Say,
Where lies the force of Pontus?

Zop. Station'd near

Bithynia's bounds, that thrice an arrow's flight
May reach their outmost guard.

Oro. Now, hated rival!
Now triumph for a moment---My revenge
Prepares such greeting, never more thy deeds
Shall shine to vulgar eyes---on proud Arsetes
Death soon shall close his everlasting gate,
While life to me displays the glorious path
That leads the daring mind to fame and empire.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV. SCENE I.

An Open Place in the City. ORONTES *alone.*

Orontes.

WHENCE is this seeming weight, shake off, my soul,
This lethargy, and be again Orontes.
The truce is ended—all is safe—Arsetes
Accepts our challenge—and ere this Arsetes
Waits at the forest's edge——How slowly night
Has dragg'd her course! at length the day returns,
To lift his beams upon those eyes, that never
Must view his setting splendor——See! the king!----
Dissimulation, spread thy subtlest snares,
Teach me to amuse the fond credulity
Of easy fools, with shew of what my heart
Disdains to feel——but hold——

Enter LYCOMEDES, *attended.*

Lyc. Yon' orient sun,
That, glancing from the dewy mountain, sheds
The day-spring's early blushes, on this morn
Shines with redoubled lustre; on this morn,
That gives Arsetes to the field of fame,
Our empire's champion——O, my best Orontes!
This hour, methinks the hand of Heaven once more
On destiny's eternal page begins
To enrol Bithynia's honours——Speak, my son!
Thy generous soul, now wrapt with glory, pants
To share Arsetes' danger.

Oro. Lycomedes,
I own my spirit rouzes at the call
Of martial conflict; yet, forbid it, Heaven!
My heart, impell'd by envy, should repine
To view another's honours——by the hand
Of Mars, the patron of my wars, I swear
There 's not a breast would feel Orontes' joy
To hear the fate my ardent hope divines
This morn awaits the glories of Arsetes.

Lyc. O, truly great!—nor think thy noble sword
Shall useless sleep; no—should the great event
Thy soul forebodes, attend Arsetes' valour,
Thyself with Teramenes join'd, shall pour
Our eager thousands on the troops dismay'd
Of Pontus: Arcas shall arrive to join
Our glorious arms; and universal victory
Clap her glad wings—then every happy wreath,

That hope had form'd, shall deck these hoary temples
And choral virgins hymn Bithynia's bands
Return'd in triumph home! Our Teramenes,
Already now, in pomp of martial pride,
Leaves these glad walls, and swells with war's dee notes
The soldier's ardor, while the plaited mail
Heaves on each bosom——

Enter CLEONICE, *attended.*

O, my Cleonice!
Age now, with backward gaze, on memory's plain
Revives forgotten honours——Say, my child;
Owns not thy heart a more than woman's feelings
On this eventful moment!

Cleo. Yes, my soul
Expands to greater hopes---each other thought
Now sleeps neglected---while the mightier claims
Of filial duty and my country's love
Possess me whole——the noble mind that draws
Its boasted lineage from a race of kings;
Of kings, the sacred delegates of Heaven;
Should banish every selfish view that tends not
To wide diffusive good——Oh! should the hand
Of prosperous fortune mark this happy day,
What thousands then will hail with rapture's voice
Arsetes' blest return!——for this event
Old age shall lift his wrinkled palms in praise;
The virgin's tears shall vanish into smiles;
Redoubled warmth shall nerve the soldier's arm;

Till conquest swell the breath of fame to spread
Bithynia's deeds, and lift her name to Heaven!
[*Dead march at a distance.*
Lyc. Whence is that sound? the martial symphony
With Teramenes!——these are other strains
Than joy or victory!———
Cleo. The notes of sorrow!———
And now 't is silence all!---[*Music.*]——Again!
Oro. My heart
Beats high with anxious hope and fear. [*Aside.*
Lyc. Orontes!
What do I see! these aged eyes distinguish
A martial train with low inverted pikes,
And banners trail'd to earth!---and hark! more near
Methinks I hear deep murmurs of distress,
And mingled groans, that peal in fancy's ear
Arsetes' name!———
Cleo. Arsetes'!——look, my father,
The low-hung trophy and the dusty arms.———

Enter in procession a troop of Soldiers, *to a dead march, advancing slowly from the further end of the stage: first a company trailing their lances and trophies in the dust, then the helmet, shield, and lance of* Arsetes, *borne by two* Soldiers; *next* TERAMENES, *and last a bier with a dead body, covered with a mantle, the* Soldiers *bearing branches of cypress and palm: the procession advancing towards the front of the stage, halts, and the music ceases.*

Cleo. [*Advancing towards the Trophies.*] Ha! sure I know that crest! That buckler's orb
Blaz'd with Arsetes' honours!———

Lyc. Teramenes,
Whence is this dreadful pomp of death?

Tera. I cannot———
I cannot speak!——O, royal sir, behold
Bithynia's champion! broken is the lance
Of war, the genius of the battle faints!
Arsetes is no more!——lo! there he lies
Pale from the hand of fate, no more to wake
To fame, to virtue, or Bithynia's cause.

[Cleonice *faints.*

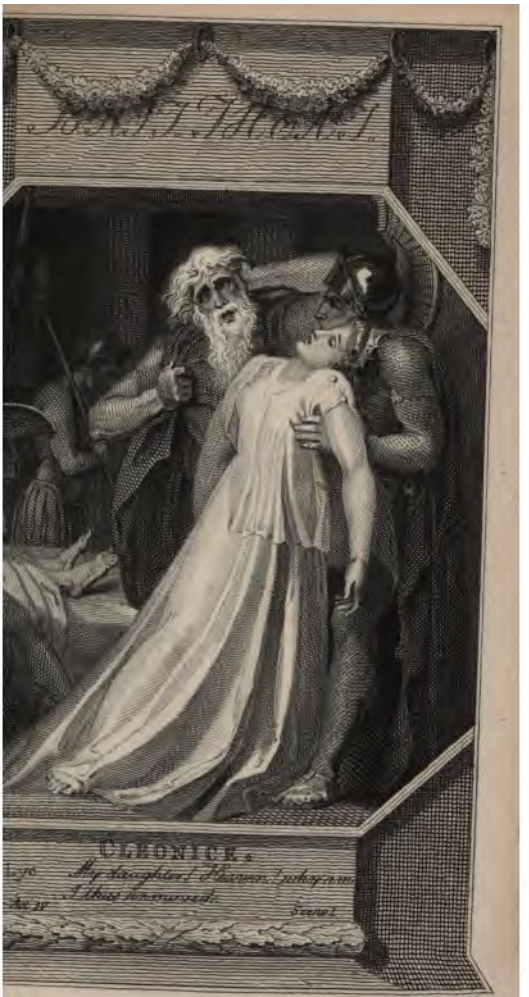
Lyc. My daughter!---Heaven! why am I thus unmov'd!
When age, unfeeling, sinks not with the stroke,
That now perhaps——But she revives---remove her
From this heart-breaking scene.———

Cleo. [*Recovering.*] Yet hold—forbear———
Ye shall not tear me hence——despair and grief
Now freeze my seat of life; the dreadful tidings
Shall load each passing gale, and every virgin,
Whose breast has known the agonies of love,
Lament with me, and mark this day with horror!

Lyc. What means my daughter!

Cleo. Pardon, Lycomedes;
Orontes, pardon—to dissemble further
Were insult to his corse—I lov'd Arsetes,
And I avow my flame———

Oro. In all my rival [*Aside.*



ted for John Bell, British Library Strand., June 23, 1795.

Lyc. Unhappy girl!—yet think not I will chide;
I feel thy anguish here!——

Tera. Where now is faith!
Where royal trust in princes!—while Arsetes
Thus falls a sacrifice to murderous treason,
And ends his life by an assassin's sword!

Lyco. Ha! murder'd, Teramenes!——

Oro. Speak; relate
Each horrid circumstance!——

Tera. Thou know'st, Arsetes
Directed, that Zopyrus might attend
Two hours from dawning day at Mars's altar:
But ere th' appointed time, a band of ruffians
Attack'd the hapless youth; in vain his valour
Oppos'd their fury; cover'd o'er with wounds,
Senseless he fell; but when Zopyrus came
And ask'd, with tears, the assassin's name, his eyes
Then nearly clos'd, he rais'd, and murmur'd forth
Pharnaces' name, and died!

Oro. [*Aside.*] Be firm, my soul,
And hide thy secret triumph!

Lyc. 'T is enough!
Pharnaces!—Artabasus!—Gods, I thank you!

Cleo. I weep not now—my heart would fain assume
The cruel firmness of unfeeling woe!
Arsetes murder'd! murder'd by Pharnaces!
Where, where was justice, where the guardian powers
That watch o'er virtue!---Yet, it will not be——
My resolution melts, and Nature pays
This streaming anguish to Arsetes' memory!

Lyc. My child, my Cleonice, in thy sorrows
A king and father share—for prayers and tears
Are all an old man's weapons: hoary age,
That breaks the vigour of Alcides, leaves
These idle sinews useless as the arms
Of female weakness!

Cleo. Why, eternal powers!
Why is not courage given to woman? shall not
Resentment brace our sex's feeble arm!
I feel, I feel it now—my bosom swells
With fury, with distraction——See Polemon,
A bleeding sacrifice!—lo! next my mother
In death's convulsive pangs, and last Arsetes,
The murder'd victim of the worst of foes!

Lyco. Hear, mighty Jove! and send thy dread vicegerent
To weigh in equal scales the deeds of men!
See, Cleonice—see where Artabasus
Shrinks in the awful trial?—soon, my daughter,
Vengeance shall rear her bloody crest—Pharnaces
Shall pay the forfeit of his deed.

Cleo. 'Tis there
My hopes alone can triumph——

[*Here the bier is brought forward.*

Lycomedes,
Thou know'st my weakness—then permit me here
To pay one mournful tribute—one last look,
To poor Arsetes!

[*Advancing towards the bier.*

Lyco. Hold! my Cleonice,

It is too much——forbear!——the nearer view
May start thee into frenzy.
Cleo. No, my father,
I can—I will support it—[*approaching the body*]——Is
this Arsetes!
Is this Bithynia's triumph!——See the mantle
That wraps his clay-cold limbs, the fatal present
Of Cleonice's hand!——O, my Arsetes!
Pale, pale and lifeless!—murderous slaves!—O, where,
Where are those eyes that shed their beams of love
On Cleonice! where those lips that wak'd
The heart-felt tenderness!—Distraction!—Hear me,
O, Heaven!—Arsetes, hear!—while thus I clasp
Thy senseless corse, while yet thy spirit hovers
O'er thy cold clay, in pity to our sorrows!
O, never shall these eye-lids know repose,
This breast be still'd to comfort—never—never
Till this accurs'd Pharnaces——Ha!—look there!——
Th' exulting murderer triumphs!—Stay, Pharnaces—
Fly not——behold, he bleeds!——see there the dread
Tribunal met, when Minos lifts the urn——
His justice shall avenge my dear Arsetes! [*Exit.*
Lyc. Her griefs are wild—attend and sooth her sorrows. [*To Attendants, as they go out.*
Oro. Tears are but woman's tribute—to the soldier
A soldier pays far other dues——Arsetes
Demands Bithynia's gratitude——Here rest
Your honour'd load, while on the cold remains
Of this lamented chief, Orontes vows
An offering to his shade——O! sir, permit me

To second, with my own, the soldier's zeal.

Lyc. Thou art my age's hope, the stay on which
My kingdom leans——take all thy courage claims,
Go—lead the troops to arms.

Oron. This sword, that oft
Has fought my sovereign's cause, again unsheath'd,
Thirsts for the blood of Pontus——Yes, I see,
I see the genius of Arsetes lead
The embattled squadrons, while his spirit still
Breathes in each breast, and marks the foe for vengeance. [*Exit.*

Lyc. Be it our care to pay the last sad rights
To lost Arsetes——to the clouds ascend
His funeral flame, and call the gods to witness
Our grateful tribute to the chief we mourn;
Then in a sacred vase select with care
His dear remains, to place them near the urn
Where the lov'd relics of Polemon, borne
A mournful trophy, ever in our sight,
Feeds still our grief, and ministers the gale
That blows the smother'd flame of deep revenge!

[*Exeunt, the procession going off in order.*

SCENE II.

A private Apartment. Enter ORONTES *and* ZOPYRUS.

Oron. Destruction to my hopes! what gods averse
Could blast my fortune further!—Can it be!
Zopyrus—all our schemes abortive thus!

What he, whom lifeless now the city mourns,
Is not Arsetes——Arsetes and Pharnaces
The same——

Zop. There is no room for doubt—the tablets
Found on the vestments of the slain unknown,
Confirm the important truth.

Oron. Unthinking wretch!
A thousand proofs recur, that speak too plain——
His birth conceal'd—surprise when Lycomedes
Propos'd the combat with the prince—distraction!
A turn like this may frustrate all!—it teems
With tenfold ruin!—Cleonice's love
To this Arsetes starts another train
Of galling doubts——What's to be done?

Zop. Already
The soldier pants impatient on the edge
Of battle—Who can tell the event? Pharnaces
May fall, and crown your wish.

Oron. But still the chance
Of war is ever doubtful——Could we draw
Pharnaces from the tumult of the fight,
The tufted grove, that shades the fane of Mars,
Might hide an ambush'd force, to whelm at once
Our foe in swift destruction.

Zop 'Tis a thought
The cause itself inspires.

Oron. Zopyrus, go;
Inflame the soldiers with Arsetes' name,
That name shall second our design—I haste
To lead them to the field—away—— [*Exit* Zopyrus.

Oron. [*Alone.*] Ascend,
Black mischief, child of hell, from the dire gloom
Of burning Acheron, whence perfidy,
Assassination, treason (names that shake
The coward soul), breathe forth inspiring aid
To vast ambition, at whose dazzling shrine
Orontes ever bends—I feel, I feel
The sacred influence here—If fortune yet
Assist my arms, in fight Pharnaces falls
An open victim; but if still averse
She thwart my glorious aims, what force denies,
Deep covert guile shall give; and all my fears
Be hush'd for ever in Pharnaces' blood. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

The Camp of ARTABASUS *and* PHARNACES.

Art. Yes, my Pharnaces, my full bosom heaves
With all a father's feelings—every god
That knows the transport here, receive my vows
Of gratitude and praise: thy blest return
Each year shall chronicle; on that glad day
The hallowed fanes shall grateful incense breathe
To those high powers, whose providential care
Reliev'd my anxious fears—Pharnaces lives!
In safety lives, clasp'd in these arms of fondness;
Yet I could chide—for O! reflect, my son,
How I have suffer'd in thy painful absence,
Could'st thou so far forget——

Phar. O, royal sir!
Believe me, while I swear, that oft the son
Reproach'd the lover; oft I sympathiz'd
With Artabasus.

Arta. Though to partial nature
The warmer sallies of ungovern'd youth,
Ere long experience turns the page of life,
Are venial errors, yet thy rashness here
Startles belief—What perils hast thou 'scap'd!
What deathful snares! perhaps, a fate like his,
Whom all Bithynia for Arsetes mourns.
Thou saidst it was Araxes——

Phar. 'T was Araxes,
Whose mien and near resemblance to your son
Assisted my design—When at my suit
You gave consent to accept Arsetes' challenge,
I trusted to Araxes' breast my secret,
Disguis'd him in the vest and arms I wore,
When 'midst Bithynia's squadrons, with design
Himself should for Arsetes' wage the combat,
Instructed first to yield himself my prisoner:
From hence I hop'd to plan some happy means
Of peace, by conference open'd with the foe.
But this distressful fate, mysterious heaven
Has cast on poor Araxes, baffles all;
And leaves me lost, uncertain whither points
This deed, or what inhuman breast design'd it.

Arta. Swear, my Pharnaces, never more to tempt
Our hostile gods in Lycomedes' court,

Nor give that life to hazard, which thy father
Would ransom with his own.

Phar. [*kneels.*] By this rever'd,
This awful hand, Pharnaces vows to sacrifice
His all to filial duty, every act
Of his succeeding life shall speak the son:
And, O! if fate requires! even love itself
Shall bleed a victim at the shrine.

Arta. Think not
That Artabasus will condemn the love
That honour sanctifies—for Cleonice,
If ever rumour's tongue can claim belief,
She merits all you feel—Nay, more, my soul
Could witness Lycomedes' regal virtues,
Did not ambition, that excess of kings,
That thirst of widen'd empire, that too far
Inspir'd his early reign, now, even in age
Impel him to unsheath invasion's sword.
The king, who, urg'd by partial glory, breaks
The sacred ties that link a social world,
Should boast no more the image of those gods,
Whose wide benevolence extends o'er all!

Phar. Still, still my hopes, with fond presumption, form'd
Ideal scenes of happiness——Could peace,
With outstretch'd arms, embrace the warring nations,
Could Lycomedes learn one self-same spirit,
Inform'd his foe Pharnaces, and his once
Belov'd Arsetes—Yet I dare, my father,
Boast a soft advocate in Cleonice.

Arta. O, my Pharnaces, what can filial duty
With him that loves, and loves like Artabasus!
Ere day can yield to night, a trusty herald
Shall to Bithynia's king, try every art
Of eloquence, to bend his soul to terms
That fit the king and father——Grant it, Heaven!
The day that sees my lov'd Pharnaces happy,
Gives Artabasus all—Then close, ye powers,
Life's anxious scenes, and let me sleep in peace——
Whence is that noise? [*Alarm and shout.*

Enter AGENOR, *his Sword drawn.*

Age. To arms, my liege, the foe,
Led by Orontes, issuing from the town,
Advances on our camp——
Phar. Orontes!———Heaven
Has heard Pharnaces' prayer---My lord, my father,
My soul's on fire, and pants to meet in field
My hated rival!
Arta. Go, Agenor; bear
Our instant orders to the troops, to range
Their serried files——Pharnaces leads them on
To fight---to victory———
Phar. Hear, God of arms!
Whose smiles have grac'd my earliest youth---O hear
This last request---Still in Pharnaces breathe
The spirit of the war!
Arta. Thy ardor wakes
My youth again---Hear now, a father's voice;
With thy strong genius, lead him through the maze

Of dangerous battle, that these eyes may trace
His fearless steps, behold his brandish'd sword
Shine forth the guardian of a nation's honour;
And, while his arm asserts his county's cause,
Assert the common rights of all mankind. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V. SCENE I.

An Apartment on the summit of a Tower, commanding a Prospect of the Fields without the Walls. Two Urns on two Pedestals. Enter CLEONICE.

Cleonice.

O, NIGHT! that soon wilt stretch oblivion's wing
O'er many a wretch, drive on the lagging shades
And close the day's dire horrors!——though to me
Sleep brings no refuge, yet congenial gloom
Befits my anguish---five revolving years
Thy senseless ashes in their peaceful dwelling
Have every day, Polemon, wak'd remembrance,
And oft receiv'd the tributary tears.
But here's a stroke surpassing all---Arsetes
Shrunk to this narrow space!---at early dawn
He tower'd in arms——a little hour he lay
A breathless corpse, and here his sad remains,
Warm from the funeral flame, are clos'd for ever!

Enter ARSINOE.

If thou bring'st comfort, speak!

Arsi. Alas! my friend,
I know it not—since from the walls my father
Led forth his followers, to support the attack
Of brave Orontes on the foe, suspense
Has dwelt on all—the citizens affrighted
Hearken to every sound that whispers aught
Of fight or victory— [*Distant alarms.*
Heaven, guard my father.

Cleo. Sure 't is the distant murmur of the fight
That swells upon the wind, and see, Arsinoe,
Ere yet the shade of evening faintly spreads
O'er the dun fields, see through the dusty whirl
The flash of arms———

Arsi. But hark! some hasty foot
Sounds on the steps that lead to this recess:
O! let me fly, and ease my beating heart
For Teramenes' safety! [*Exit.*

Cleo. Nearer still
I hear the deepening roar---another shout!
There, there perhaps, Pharnaces, hated name!
Sheds wide destruction!—can it be, ye powers!
Can he who stoop'd to murder, rise in aught
That 's great or noble? sure, Arsetes' shade
Should hover round, and in the day of battle
Wither his strength!---Some fatal news at hand!
'T is Teramenes---Heavens!——

Enter TERAMENES, *and* Officers.

Tera. Where, where 's the king?
——O, Cleonice———

Cleo. Speak———
Tera. Bithynia's lost!———
Our latest hour is come.———

Enter LYCOMEDES.

Lyc. What means this tumult?
What from the camp---but now a peal of shouts
Broke on my slumbering sense---how stand our hopes?
Tera. The foe is in the walls!---our bands repuls'd
By Artabasus and his son, retreated
To gain the gates---with them the conquering troops
Of Pontus enter'd.———
Lyc. 'T is enough---these eyes
Have seen enough of woe!---Where is Orontes?
Tera. I saw him last, with dauntless courage, brave
The hostile troops, when headed by Pharnaces
They thunder'd through the gates, at which dire moment
He vanish'd from my sight, and O! I fear
He falls a victim to this dreadful day!——
But time forbids our vain laments---this instant
The victor may be here---one way remains
That yet may save my king---the western tower
Is still our own, and may perhaps sustain
The foe's attack, till Arcas shall arrive———
But now, Arsinoe thither with a guard
I sent---retire, my liege, with Cleonice,
In safety there.
Lyc. No---though this trembling arm
Shrinks from the buckler's weight, I can provoke
The death I wish for from the pitying foe!

Come forth; this sword, that long has idly slept,
Shall once again———

Cleo. What means my father?—yet
Retract your purpose—think on Cleonice!
Forsaken here—I see, I see the hand
Of ruffian force drag by the silver locks
Thy venerable age—I see those features,
That oft have fondly smil'd on Cleonice,
In agony distorted.—What remains
For me at that curst moment?—wild with horror
To rend my scatter'd hair—against the pavement
Dash these poor limbs—then bare my breast to meet
The steel, yet reeking with a parent's life,
And mingle blood with his that gave me being!——

Lyc. Distracting image!—O, my child! my child!
And shall I then——this moment I could yield
The last cold drops that linger in these veins—
And bless the hand that struck me—yet when death
Draws his dark veil—to catch a glimpse of life,
But to behold thee die—Haste, let me hence
To lose the dreadful thought—a minute longer
May place us safe beyond the future reach
Of fate, of misery, and Artabasus!

Cleo. O, hear me still—yet let these filial tears
Prevail.—Death is the last, the sure resource,
And when fate closes every path that leads
To future hope—this arm can then, my father,
Fix one great period to a life of woes.

Tera. My sovereign, Artabasus and Barzanes
Are near at hand, from hence we may discern

Their bucklers blaze [*looking out*]; away, my liege!

Lyc. O! never!——

They shall be met—these wither'd limbs—look there,
See those sad monuments— [*Points to the Urns.*
And shall the hands,
The murderous hands by which they fell, here grasp
The sword in triumph?—No, these trembling feet
Shall meet their fury. [*Going.*

Cleo. Yet—O, yet, my father!
One moment hear——

Tera. Forgive me, royal sir!
If thus compell'd—Learchus, help---

Lyc. [*Struggling.*] Unhand me———
'T is more than treason---hence!———
[*Drops his sword in the struggle.*

Cleo. Lo! there, my father,
Some god descends, and from your nerveless arm
Strikes your resisting weapon.

Lyc. O, shame! shame!
'T is sure the work of heaven!---then all is past!
I yield---Lead, lead me where thou wilt! [*Shout.*

Tera. Again!
Conduct them safely through the secret gate,
Meantime myself, with some few friends will seek
Orontes, and secure my king's retreat. [*Exit.*

Cleo. O! hear me, Heaven! for Lycomedes hear!
Still save him, sinking in this gulph of ruin!
Or let one moment whelm us both in death,
And end a father's and a daughter's woes! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

An open Place in the City. Enter ARTABASUS, BARZANES, *and* Soldiers.

Arta. Thus far, Barzanes, has the victor wreath
Crown'd virtue with success—our arms, by heaven
Impell'd to guard the sacred rights of men,
Have to their deep recess pursu'd the foe.
The city now is ours---the hostile bands
Submissive, or dispers'd, contend no longer;
Then sheath the sword of death, and bid resentment
To mercy yield her reign---the noble mind,
Though justice draw the sword, regrets that triumph
Humanity must mourn: for Lycomedes,
Give heedful orders, that whate'er shall chance,
To make him prisoner, to our better fortune,
They treat him with such honours as befit
His name and rank, a captive of the war.

Enter Officer.

Offi. My liege, this instant Lycomedes, taken,
With Cleonice, as they sought to gain
The western tower, conducted by the guard,
Attend your sovereign will. [*Exit.*

Enter LYCOMEDES, CLEONICE *in chains*, Guards.

Lyc. [*Entering*] Lead me to him,
Whom Lycomedes' evil star has rais'd
On fallen Bithynia's ruin---Cleonice

Associate in thy father's woes———Are these
The hands that once I fondly press'd in mine,
When on my knee thy pratling infancy
Held me in all a parent's dear suspence?
Are these lov'd hands now clasp'd in rugged steel
And slavish manacles?

Cleo. These hands, my father,
Exult in chains that give to Cleonice,
A glorious share in Lycomedes' sufferings.
Nor are they bonds, since still these filial arms
Embrace my father—O! believe me, sir,
To suffer thus with you is height of bliss,
Compar'd to freedom banish'd from your presence.

Arta. If thou art he—O, Lycomedes!—hear
No more thy foe, but brother—would to heaven
Thy age would now repose in peace! those hairs
Demand respect and honour—let me then
Exchange these slavish ties, for other ties
Of amity and love.

[*Makes a sign to the Guard who takes off his chains.*
For thee, fair princess,
What shall I say?—these arms prophan'd, demand
More than a king's atonement. [*Takes off her chains.*
Is there ought
Beside the gift of freedom?

Cleo. Artabasus,
There needs no more—from him that slew my brother
All gifts are equal---though to the woman's weakness
I yield these tears, my firmer soul disdains
The tribute nature pays;---then once again

Restore those shackles---give me, to the depth
Of dungeon gloom---there 's nor a hostile pang
That enmity inflicts, but Cleonice
Shall meet it all!---My father too---O, Heaven!
Hence female softness---yes, behold that weak
Depress'd old age, behold this bloom of youth
Nurs'd in the pomp of courts---yet, Artabasus,
This pair, unshaken, dares your worst of pains.

Lyc. Hear every god my vows renew'd---hear too
Polemon's shade! whene'er this hand shall join
In friendly league with Pontus, haunt each hour
Of ebbing life with horror's direst forms!

Arta. Yet hear me, Lycomedes, still reflect,
Thyself a warrior once, in fight he fell,
Fell as a hero ought.-- In arms of old
When demi-gods have fought, the fields have oft
Borne slaughter'd chiefs, whose parents from the sky
View'd their pale sons, and yielded to their fate.

Lyc. Hear, hear, ye fathers; hear how cool the victor
Can palliate death, and sooth a parent's loss.
Polemon fell in fight---yes, Artabasus,
Nobly indeed he fell---too daring youth!
Whose unfledg'd open valour met the arm
Of veteran cruelty---but hear, proud man,
Do all thy enemies so fairly perish?---
How died Arsetes! hapless youth---the last
The glorious work of Artabasus' race!
Midst all my sufferings, still I joy to know
Polemon died a hero---Had the hand
Of time drawn out his early age to years

Of ripe experience, he, like poor Arsetes,
Had fall'n the murderer's victim.

Arta. Little, sure,
Thou know'st the work of fate,---the youth who f
Was by Pharnaces———

Cleo. By Pharnaces!——yes,
I know it well---Is this the glorious hero,
The boasted pupil in the school of Mars?
Did he for this in Rome's immortal ranks
Learn the brave trade of arms, to edge the sword
Of base assassination, that the wiles
Of black conspiracy might catch that life,
Which ne'er had sunk in equal field of combat!
Yes——my Arsetes——to Pharnaces' cruelty
Thou fall'st a victim---fall'st by him, whose arm
Had else perhaps confess'd thy valour's force.
Then had those limbs, my father, never felt
The weight of chains---yet should Orontes live,
His valorous arm---perhaps Pharnaces' life
Atones for poor Arsetes——

Arta. Every power
Forbid the implication! Lycomedes,
Could I as well appease each vengeful thought
For lost Polemon, as I now can clear
The virtue of my son, by lying fame
Traduc'd———

Cleo. Did not his lips all pale in death
Proclaim Pharnaces guilty?

Arta. There indeed,
Mysterious darkness lurks---but, Lycomedes,

Speak---should the hero whose triumphant arm
Espous'd Bithynia's cause---should he yet live——

Cleo. Yet live! what means this cruel sport with woe?

Arta. Hear then, and wondering hear---Arsetes lives,
Arsetes and Pharnaces are the same.

Lyc. The same!---speak, Artabasus——

Enter Officer.

Off. Haste, my sovereign!
Haste to the grove of palms,---the prince assail'd
By numbers, with Orontes at their head,
A hundred lances glitter at his breast,
And all their cry is vengeance and Arsetes.

Arta. What do I hear! now, cruel Lycomedes,
Now, Cleonice, glut your rage,---yet know
Arsetes lives, and lives in my Pharnaces,
Or this dread moment seals perhaps his doom,
And ends a wretched parent!—— [*Ex.* Art. *and* Bar.

Cleo. Does he live,
Live in Pharnaces! O, mysterious Heaven!
Should it be thus, how has my ruthless hatred
Pursued the man whom most I lov'd---the man
(Madness is in the thought) who now may breathe
His last.——

Lyc. Forbid it, virtue!---Gods! I feel
A secret impulse here---it must not be——
For me he oft has triumph'd——spite of age
And impotence of strength, yet will I face
This last, this fatal scene——my Cleonice,
Thy courage will pursue thy father's steps;

Come, let us prove the worst of fortune's malice,
Then close our eyes in peace, and rest for ever! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A Grove of palm trees, with the Temple of Mars discovered at a distance. [*Clashing of swords.*]
Enter ORONTES *retreating before* PHARNACES; *a Party of* Orontes *driven off by the Soldiers of* Pharnaces.

Phar. Enough, my friends, enough—this life demands
My sword alone—for thee, whose murderous guile
With seeming manhood, drew me from the fight
To fall by numbers, from this arm receive
Thy treason's due reward.
Oro. Fortune at length
Deceives my aim;——but be it so——I scorn
To depecate thy vengeance—well thou know'st
Orontes now——Zopyrus has confess'd,
Pale, trembling dastard! sinking by thy arm,
Our first device against the feign'd Arsetes——
This last is mine—though interest and ambition
Forbid me now to risk an equal combat,
Yet since thy hated genius still prevails,---
Hence every vain disguise---as man to man,
I dare thy worst.
Phar. Behold, thou double traitor!
The grove and temple where Araxes fell:
Where now thy followers lurk'd in fatal ambush
To ensnare Pharnaces---tremble now, while justice
Here lifts the sword on this devoted spot,

Here claims a sacrifice to every virtue,
Faith, friendship, loyalty, and poor Araxes! [*Fight.*
Arta. [*Within.*] Defend, defend my son! [Oron. *falls.*
Phar. There sink for ever,
Nor leave thy equal here to curse mankind!

Enter ARTABASUS *and* AGENOR.

Arta. Art thou then safe?---my son! my son!
Phar. My father!

Enter LYCOMEDES, CLEONICE, *and* TERAMENES.

Cleo. [*Entering.*] Death has been busy---sure the battle's tumult
Rag'd here but now———
Phar. [*Turning.*] 'T is Cleonice's voice!
Lyc. He lives indeed! 't is he!---the guardian genius
That watch'd Bithynia's safety——
Cleo. Heavenly Powers!
And yet it cannot---speak,---O speak, my father,
Ere this lov'd phantom———
Phar. Still Arsetes lives;
Behold him here;——[*Kneels*]——No more unknown, who now
Assert the lineal honours that await
A kingdom's heir and Artabasus' son.
Cleo. Pharnaces rise,---sure 't is allusion all!
What then was he, whose pale and lifeless corse——
Arta. The youth, whom late you mourn'd for slain Arsetes,
Was in his stead deputed for the fight.
Phar. Orontes and Zopyrus have confess'd
The snare in which this hapless victim fell;

Orontes drew me now, by fraudful ambush,
To perish here---behold where lies the traitor;
His guilty life fast ebbing with his blood.

Lyc. Orontes!---where! then where is virtue, go
Now only living with Bithynia's foes!
Why, Artabasus, did Polemon fall!
Or fall by thee!——

Oro. [*Raising himself.*] Hear, most unhappy fath
Thou seek'st t' avenge Polemon's death,---behold
Him now reveng'd---lo! here his murderer lies!

Arta. The youth that fell by me!

Oro. By thee he fell,
But fell unwounded---to his tent convey'd
Senseless awhile, he lay---myself alone
Watch'd his returning life---at that fell moment,
Ambition, powerful fiend! held forth to view
Bithynia's crown---my sacrilegious hand
Uplifted then, with murderous weapon struck
My prince's life.

Lyc. What do I hear!---my blood
Is chill'd!---pernicious villain!---take the vengeanc
A father's fury—— [*Draws, is held by* Arta. *and* T

Cleo. Gracious Heaven!---my brother!———

Tera. Yet hold---though great your woes---
guilty wretch
Already gasps in death, and shivering stands
On that dread brink, where vast eternity
Unfolds her infinite abyss.———

Lyc. Polemon!
My murder'd boy!

Oro. O thou bright sun! whose beams

Now set in blood, dost thou not haste to veil
Thy head in night, while Nature, through her works
Shrinks from a wretch like me!--Come, deepest darkness,
Hide, hide me from myself!---hence, bleeding phantom,
Why dost thou haunt me still!---another!---hence!
They drive me to the precipice---I sink——
———O, Lycomedes!——— [*Dies.*

Lyc. Lo! where lies the serpent
That late I nourish'd in my breast, to sting
My unsuspecting heart———

Arta. A father's nature
Feels for thy dreadful trial——Lycomedes,
Receive this pledge of friendship——still be thine
Bithynia's crown, nor claim I aught from conquest
But mutual peace——some other time shall tell
This work of fate——But who shall search the ways
Of Heaven inscrutable, or dare to question
Why the same power beheld Polemon fall,
And sav'd Pharnaces for a father's love?
'T is ours with humble praise to take from Jove
The cordial draught of joy, not murmur when
He deals the cup of woe.

Lyc. O, Artabasus!
No longer now my foe—this honour'd hand,
This hand now free from my Polemon's death,
Confirm the brother's union——balmy peace
Rest with his manes, and remembrance ever
With odorous praise surround his laurell'd tomb!
But yet I have a son—in thee he lives,
Lives in Pharnaces——[*Embrace.*]——Yes, my more
than brother,

Our friendship knit shall plant the welcome olives
Through both our lands, and bless their sons with peace!
Phar. It must, it must—some genius whispers me
Oblivion to my cares, and bright-wing'd Hope,
Like Cleonice, points my soul to bliss!
Lyc. If bliss be Cleonice, she is yours
Once more, my son——
Arta. My daughter——every God
Propitious smile to crown your virtuous love!
Phar. Speak, Cleonice! does thy heart refuse
To own the mighty rapture?
Cleo. O, Pharnaces!
Think how my bosom throbs with various tumult
Of mingled joy and grief——My brother's fate
Still labours here, 'spite of the bliss that fills
My conscious heart; for bliss it is to avow
My boundless passion——wife of my Pharnaces,
Or rather that dear name which first subdu'd
My virgin heart—my ever lov'd Arsetes!
Lyc. To thee, my son Pharnaces, I resign
Bithynia's crown, while I, retir'd in ease,
Steal gently down the peaceful vale of life.
Arta. Behold the latent treason brought to light!
Though hid from mortal eye, the Eternal Mind
Pervades the deepest gloom——Confess, my brother,
The dazzling meteor that misled thy youth,
And even seduc'd thy age: the monarch fir'd
With false ambition for a conqueror's name,
Is but the lash of Jove to scourge mankind.
For thee, my son, by Lycomedes rais'd
To guide, with early hand, the reins of empire,

Remember what the duty of a king
Exacts, while each domestic bliss shall crown
Thy private hours, to watch thy people's weal,
And share, like Heaven, thy happiness with all.

[*Exeunt Omnes.*

EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs. BULKELY.

OUR author, all submission, sends me here,
To make excuses for your simple cheer;
And I, that have no interest in his scenes,
Must bear the train of tragic kings and queens.
Shall I support the weakness of his Muse?—
Egad—if so—I'll fit him with abuse—
I'll soon dissect his fine-spun work, and shew
That all his plot has more of farce than woe.
For, after all, the creature's much deceiv'd,
If e'er he thinks his tale can be believ'd.
So tame and so inanimate his maid is—
How very different from our modern ladies!—
What, could a blooming lass with ripen'd charms,
Be held so long from her admirer's arms?—
If such were truths in prudish heathen climes,
Examples vary in our later times—
Then for theatric play—how poor! how cold!
A heroine's language should be nobly bold,
Outstrip the decency of vulgar life,
Mouth at the heavens, and set the gods at strife.—

Time was indeed, an antiquated bard
Paid to a beldame, nature, some regard,
And drew his females with such simple features,
That all, who saw, believ'd them human creatures.
Plain Desdemona *bore no trace of art,*
And Portia *play'd a wife's domestic part;*
While Constance *shew'd, but what before we knew,*
And only griev'd, as real mothers do.—
Shall this stale poet give the drama law,
Who poorly copied only what he saw?
Nay, stole from life, in every clime and age,
The characters that fill his boasted page?——
Well! as I live, 't is he!—(looking out)—*O, are you come?*
Does all go well?—poor devil!—seal his doom.
This live-long night he watches every eye,
Talks, like his heroes, in soliloquy—
Then starts aside—What! something goes amiss?—
'Sure 't is the distant murmur of a hiss!'——
Alas! kind soul!---I pity his condition,
And will in his behalf this house petition:—
To you, good folks above, for ever ready
To serve a friend, all English hearts and steady;
To you, ye men of candour, sense, and wit,
Who fill the circle of this awful pit;
To you, ye ladies, ever prone to spare
The bard, who love and beauty makes his care;
I here commend him---take him to your favour,
And I' ll be surety for his good behaviour.

THE

ORPHAN OF CHINA.

A

TRAGEDY.

By ARTHUR MURPHY, Esq.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL, DRURY-LANE.

LONDON:

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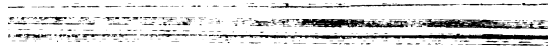

TO THE RIGHT HON.

JOHN EARL OF BUTE,

GROOM OF THE STOLE TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES.

MY LORD,

THE generous concern you were pleased to express for the anxieties of a young Author, then wholly unknown to your Lordship, and trembling for his first attempt towards "the gravest, moralest, and most profitable of all poems," as Milton calls a Tragedy, was the distinguishing mark of a mind truly great, and endued with those fine feelings which are the ornaments of even greatness itself. To this your innate partiality for every endeavour in the polite arts I must ascribe it, that the following scenes met with an early approbation from your Lordship; an approbation that was at once the Author's pride, and his strongest assurance of success.

The Public have indeed very far outgone my most sanguine hopes, in their reception of this piece: but now, my Lord, the Orphan *has another severe trial to go through; he must adventure into the world, unassisted by the advantages of representation: he must enter your Lordship's closet, and there stand the examination of the most accurate criticism.* In meti descendat judicis aures. *This cannot but be an alarming circumstance to a writer fully conscious of his own inability; who has not been able en-*

tirely to please even his own taste; who despairs of satisfying others of a more exalted relish in the arts, and therefore craves at your Lordship's hands that protection to his industry, which, he is aware, cannot be granted to his merit.

I have the honour to remain, with the truest respect, and most grateful acknowledgment,

My Lord, your Lordship's most obliged,

And most devoted humble servant,

ARTHUR MURPHY.

Lincoln's Inn, April 30, 1759.

TO

M. DE VOLTAIRE.

SIR,

A LETTER to you from an English author will carry with it the appearance of corresponding with the enemy; not only as the two nations are at present involved in a difficult and important war, but also because in many of your late writings you seem determined to live in a state of hostility with the British Nation. Whenever we come in your way, 'we are ferocious, 'we are islanders, we are the people whom your coun-'try has taught, we fall behind other nations in point 'of taste and elegance of composition; the same cause 'that has withheld from us a genius for painting and 'music, has also deprived us of the true spirit of 'Tragedy; and, in short, barbarism still prevails 'among us.'

But, notwithstanding this vein of prejudice, which has discoloured almost all your *fugitive pieces*, there still breathes throughout your writings such a general spirit of humanity and zeal for the honour of the Republic of Letters, that I am inclined to imagine the author of the English Orphan of China (an obscure islander) may still address you upon terms of amity and literary benevolence.

As I have attempted a tragedy upon a subject that has exercised your excellent talents, and thus have dared to try my strength in the bow of Ulysses, I hold myself in some sort accountable to M. De Voltaire for the departure I have made from his plan, and the substitution of a new fable of my own.

My first propensity to this story was occasioned by the remarks of an admirable critic * of our own upon the Orphan of the House of Chau, preserved to us by the industrious and sensible P. Du Halde, which, as our learned commentator observes, amidst great wildness and irregularity, has still some traces of resemblance to the beautiful models of antiquity. In my reflections upon this piece, I imagined I saw a blemish in the manner of saving the Orphan, by the tame resignation of another infant in his place; especially when the subject afforded so fair an opportunity to delineate the strugglings of a parent on so trying an occasion. It therefore occurred to me, if a fable could be framed, in which the Father and the two Young Men might be interwoven with probability and perspicuity, and not embarrassed with all the perplexities of a riddle, as, you know, is the case of the Heraclius of Corneille, that then many situations might arise, in which some of the nearest affections of the heart might be awakened: but even then I was too conscious that

* Mr. Hurd, in his Commentary upon Horace.

this must be executed in its full force by a genius very different from myself.

In this state of mind, Sir, I heard with pleasure that M. de Voltaire had produced at Paris his L'Orphelin de la Chine: I ardently longed for a perusal of the piece, expecting that such a writer would certainly seize all the striking incidents which might naturally grow out of so pregnant a story, and that he would leave no source of passion unopened. I was in some sort, but not wholly disappointed: I saw M. De Voltaire rushing into the midst of things at once; opening his subject in an alarming manner; and, after the narrative relating to Gengiskan is over, working up his first act like a poet indeed.

Meum qui pectus inaniter angit
Ut Magus.

In the beginning of the second act, he again touches our affections with a master-hand; but, like a rower who has put forth all his strength, and suddenly slackens his exertion, I saw, or imagined I saw him give way all at once; the great tumult of the passions is over; the interest wears away; Gengiskan talks politics; the tenderness of a mother, flying with all the strong impulses of nature to the relief of her child, is thrown into cold unimpassioned narrative; the *role pour l'amoureux* must have its place, and the rough conqueror of a whole people must instantly become

Le Chevalier Gengiskan, as errant a lover as ever sighed in the Thuilleries at Paris. Your own words, Sir, strongly expressive of that manly and sensible taste, which distinguishes you throughout Europe, occurred to me on this occasion: 'Quelle place pour la galanterie que le parricide & l'inceste, qui désolent une famille, & la contagion qui ravage un pais? Et quel exemple plus frapant du ridicule de notre theatre, & du pouvoir de l'habitude, que Corneille, d'un côté, qui fait dire à Thésée.———

'Quelque ravage affreux qu'étale ici la Peste;
'L'absence aux vrais amans est encore plus funeste.

'Et moi, qui, soixante ans apres lui, viens faire parler 'une vielle Jocaste d'un viel amour': & tout cela pour 'complaire au goût le plus fade & le plus faux qui ait 'jamais corrumpu la literature.' Indeed, Sir, Gengiskan, in the very moment of overwhelming a whole nation, usurping a crown, and massacring the royal family, except one infant, whom he is in quest of, appeared to me exactly like the amorous Œdipus in the midst of a destructive plague. '*Nunc non erat his locus.*'—How would that noble performance, that *chef d'œuvre* of your country, the Athalie of Racine, have been defaced by the gallantry of an intrigue, if a tyrant had been introduced to make love to the wife of the high-priest? or if Joad, entertaining a secret affection for Athalie, and being asked what orders he would give relating to the delivery of his country, should answer, "aucune," none at all.—And yet this

is the language of a northern conqueror, whining for a Mandarine's wife, who has no power of resisting, and having no relation to the royal family, could not, by an intermarriage, strengthen his interest in the crown. But to you, who have told us that Love should reign a very tyrant in tragedy, or not appear there at all, being unfit for the second place; to you, who have said that Nero should not hide himself behind a tapestry, to overhear the conversation of his mistress and his rival; to you, Sir, what need I urge these remarks? To fill up the long career of a tragedy with this episodic love must certainly have been the motive that led you into this error; an error I take the liberty to call it, because I have observed it to be the hackneyed and ineffectual stratagem of many modern writers. Within the compass of my reading, there is hardly a bad man in any play, but he is in love with some very good woman: the scenes that pass between them, I have always remarked, are found dull and unawakening by the audience, even though adorned with all the graces of such composition as yours, of which it is but justice to say, that it bestows embellishments upon every subject.

For me, Sir, who only draw in crayons, who have no resource to those lasting colours of imagination with which you set off every thing; a writer such as I am, Sir, could not presume to support that duplicity of passion which runs through your piece. I could not pre-

tend, by the powers of style, to suborn an audience in favour of those secondary passages, from which their attention naturally revolts. A plainer and more simple method lay before me. I was necessitated to keep the main object as much as possible before the eye; and therefore it was that I took a survey of my subject, in order to catch at every thing that seemed to me to result with order and propriety from it. A scantiness of interesting business seemed to me a primary defect in the construction of the French Orphan of China, and that I imagined had its source in the early date of your play. By beginning almost "*gemino ab ovo*," by making the Orphan and the Mandarine's son children in their cradles, it appeared to me that you had stripped yourself of two characters, which might be produced in an amiable light, so as to engage the affections of their auditors, not only for themselves, but consequentially for those also to whom they should stand in any degree of relation. From this conduct I proposed a further advantage, that of effacing the very obvious resemblance to the Andromache, which now strikes every body in your plan. This last remark I do not urge against accidental and distant coincidencies of sentiment, diction, or fable. Many of the Greek plays, we know, had a family-likeness, such as an Œdipus, an Electra, an Iphigenia in Tauris, in Aulis, a Merope, &c. But what is a beauty in Racine, seems in his great successor to be a blemish. In the former, nothing depends on the life of Astyanax but

what was very natural---the happiness of the mother: in the latter, the fate of a kingdom is grafted upon the fortunes of an infant; and I ask your own feelings, (for no body knows the human heart better) whether an audience is likely to take any considerable interest in the destiny of a babe, who, when your Zamti has saved him, cannot produce any change, any revolution in the affairs of China? No, Sir; the conquered remain in the same abject state of vassalage, and the preservation of the infant king becomes therefore almost uninteresting, certainly unimportant: whereas, when the Orphan is grown up to maturity, when he is a moral agent in the piece, when a plan is laid for revenging himself on the destroyers of his family, it then becomes a more pressing motive in the Mandarine's mind; nay, it is almost his duty, in such a case, to sacrifice even his own offspring for the good of his country. In your story, Sir, give me leave to say, I do not see what end can be answered by Zamti's loyalty? His prospect is at least so distant that it becomes almost chimerical. And therefore, as history warrants an expulsion of the Tartars; as it was not upon the first inroad, but in process of time and experience, that they learned to incorporate themselves with the conquered, by adopting their laws and customs, I had recourse to my own preconceived notions. Whether I was partially attached to them, or whether my reasonings upon your fable were just, you, Sir, and the public, will determine.

You will perceive, Sir, in the English Orphan some occasional insertions of sentiment from your elegant performance. To use the expression of the late Mr. Dryden, when he talks of Ben Jonson's imitation of the ancients, you *will often track me in your snow*. For this I shall make no apology, either to the public or to you: none to the public, because they have applauded some strokes for which I am indebted to you; and none certainly to you, because you are well aware I have in this instance followed the example of many admired writers; Boileau, Corneille, and Racine, in France; and in England, Milton, Mr. Addison, and Mr. Pope. It was finely said by you, (I have read the story, and take it upon trust) when it was objected to the celebrated Abbé Metastasio, as a reproach, that he had frequent transfusions of thought from your writings, 'Ah! le cher voleur! il m'a bien embelli.' This talent of embellishing I do not pretend to: to avail myself of my reading, and to improve my own productions, is all I can pretend to; and that, I flatter myself, I have done, not only by transplanting from you, but also from many of the writers of antiquity. If the authorities I have above mentioned were not sufficient, I could add another very bright example, the example of M. De Voltaire, whom I have often tracked, to use the same expression, in the *snow of Shakspere*. The snow of Shakspere is but a cold expression; but perhaps it will be more agreeable to you than a word of greater energy, that should convey a

full idea of the astonishing powers of that great man; for we islanders have remarked of late, that M. De Voltaire has a particular satisfaction in descanting on the faults of the most wonderful genius that ever existed since the æra of Homer, and that too, even then, when he is under obligations to him; insomuch that a very ingenious gentleman of my acquaintance tells me, that whenever you treat the English bard as a drunken savage in your *avant propos*, he always deems it a sure prognostic that your play is the better for him.

If the great scenes of Shakspere, Sir; if his boundless view of all nature---the lawn, the wilderness, the blasted heath, mountains, and craggy rocks, with thunder and lightning on their brows;—if these cannot strike the imagination of M. De Voltaire, how can I expect that the studied regularity of my little shrubbery should afford him any kind of pleasure? To drop the metaphor, if the following tragedy does not appear to you a monstrous Farce, it is all I can reasonably expect. But whatever may be your opinion of it, I must beg that you will not make it the criterion by which you would decide concerning the taste of the English nation, or the present state of literature among us. What you have humbly said of yourself, in order to do honour to your nation, I can assert with truth of the author of the English Orphan, that he is one of the worst poets now in this country. It is true, in-

deed, that the play has been received with uncommon applause; that so elegant a writer as the author of Creusa and the Roman Father was my critic and my friend; and that a great deal of very particular honour has been done me by many persons of the first distinction. But, give me leave to say, they all know the faults of the piece as well as if it had been discussed by the Academy of *Belles Letters*.——We are a generous nation, Sir; and even the faintest approaches to merit always meet here the warmest encouragement. One thing further I will assure you, in case you should discover any traces of barbarism in the style or fable, That if you had been present at the representation, you would have seen a theatrical splendor conducted with a *bienseance* unknown to the *scene Francoise*; the performers of Zaphimri and Hamet, by their interesting manner, would have made you regret that you had not enriched your pieee with two characters, to which a colourist, like you, would have given the most beautiful touches of the pencil, had the idea struck your fancy; and, though a weak state of health deprived the play of so fine an actress as Mrs. Cibber, you would have beheld in Mandane a figure that would be an ornament to any stage in Europe, and you would have acknowledged that her acting promises to equal the elegance of her person: moreover, you would have seen a Zamti, whose exquisite powers are capable of adding pathos and harmony even to our great Shakspere, and have already been the chief support of some of your own scenes upon the English stage.

Upon the whole, Sir, I beg you will not imagine that I have written this tragedy in the fond hope of eclipsing so celebrated a writer as M. De Voltaire: I had an humbler motive, *propter amorem quod te imitari aveo.* Could I do that in any distant degree, it would very amply gratify the ambition of,

Sir, your real admirer,

And most humble servant,

The AUTHOR of the

ORPHAN of CHINA.

London, April, 30, 1759.

PROLOGUE.

BY WILLIAM WHITEHEAD, ESQ. POET-LAUREAT

SPOKEN BY MR. HOLLAND.

ENOUGH of Greece and Rome. The exhausted store
Of either nation now can charm no more:
Ev'n adventitious helps in vain we try,
Our triumphs languish in the public eye;
And grave processions, musically slow,
Here pass unheeded—as a Lord Mayor's shew.
On eagle wings the poet of to-night
Soars for fresh virtues to the source of light,
To China's eastern realms: and boldly bears
Confucius' morals to Britannia's ears.
Accept th' imported boon; as echoing Greece
Receiv'd from wand'ring chiefs her golden fleece;
Nor only richer by the spoils become,
But praise th' advent'rous youth, who brings them home.
One dubious character, we own, he draws,
A patriot zealous in a Monarch's cause!
Nice is the task the varying hand to guide,
And teach the blending colours to divide;
Where, rainbow-like, th' encroaching tints invade
Each other's bounds, and mingle light with shade.
If then, assiduous to obtain his end,
You find too far the subject's zeal extend;
If undistinguish'd loyalty prevails
Where nature shrinks, and strong affection fails,

bina's tenets charge the fond mistake,
pare his error for his virtue's sake.
m nobler motives our allegiance springs,
ritain knows no Right Divine in Kings.
Freedom's choice that boasted right arose,
brough each line from Freedom's choice it flows.
e, with Mercy join'd, the throne maintains;
n his People's Hearts our Monarch *reigns,*

Dramatis Personæ.

Men.

TIMURKAAN, Emperor of the Tartars, -	Mr. HAVARD.
OCTAR, a Tartar General, - - - - -	Mr. BRANSBY.
ZAMTI, a Mandarine, - - - - - -	Mr. GARRICK.
ETAN, educated as his Son, - - - - -	Mr. MOSSOP.
HAMET, a youthful Captive, - - - -	Mr. HOLLAND.
MORAT, a faithful Friend of Zamti, - -	Mr. BURTON.
MIRVAN, a Chinese in the Tartar's service, secretly a friend of Zamti,	Mr. DAVIES.
ORASMING, ZIMVENTI, Two Conspirators,	Mr. PACKER. Mr. AUSTIN.

Woman.

MANDANE, Zamti's wife, - - - - - -	Mrs. YATES.

Messenger, Guards, &c.

Scene, *Pekin, Capital of China.*

THE ORPHAN OF CHINA.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter MANDANE *and* MIRVAN.

Mandane.

No, never; Mirvan, never—still this heart
Must throb with ceaseless woe—All-gracious Heav'n!
Will not this palace, drench'd in gore; the crown
Of China's kings fix'd on the Tartar's brow;
Will not a tract of twenty years in bondage!
Ah! will not these suffice, without a fresh cause
Of bitter anguish in Mandane's breast?—

Mir. Better suppress these unavailing tears,
This fruitless flood of grief.

Man. It will not be———
Ev'n 'midst the horrors of this dismal hour,
When fate has all transferr'd from lost Cathai
To vile barbarian hands;—in such an hour,
This heart, revolting from the public cause,
Bleeds from a private source; bleeds for the woes
That hang o'er Zamti's house.———

Mir. Alas! Mandane,
Amidst the gen'ral wreck, who does not feel
The keen domestic pang?

Man. Yes, all.—We all
Must feel the kindred-touch; daily the cries
Of widows, orphans, father, son, and brother,
In vain are sent to heav'n;—the wasteful rage
Of these barbarians—these accurs'd invaders—
Burns with increasing fire;—the thunder still
Rolls o'er our heads, threatening with hideous crash
To fall at once, and bury us in ruin.

Mir. And quickly fall it must!—the hand of heav'n
Weighs this great empire down.

Man. Nay, tax not Heav'n!
Almighty Justice never bares it's arm
'Gainst innocence and truth. 'Tis Timurkan,
That fell barbarian—that insatiate waster———
May curses blast the Tartar!—he—'tis he
Has bore down all, and still his slaught'ring sword
In yonder field of death, where Corea's troops
Made their last stand for Liberty and China,
Crimsons the land with blood. This battle lost,
Oh! then farewel to all!—But, Mirvan, say,
How came the tidings?

Mir. From yon lofty tow'r,
As my eyes, straining tow'rd the distant plain,
Sent forth an anxious look, through clouds of dust
The savage bands appear'd; the western sun
Gleam'd on their burnish'd helms; and soon a shout
From the glad multitude proclaim'd th' approach

Of Timurkan:—elated with new conquest,
The tyrant comes, and where his wrath will stop
Heav'n only knows!———

Man. Oh! there—there lies the thought
At which imagination starts, appall'd
With horror at the scene her busy workings
Have colour'd to my sight—there lies the thought
That wakens all a mother's fears—alas!
I tremble for my son!

Mir. Your son!—kind Heav'n!
Have you not check'd his ardour?—with your tears,
Your soft authority, restrain'd the hero
From the alarms of war?———

Man. Alas, good Mirvan,
Thou little know'st his danger!—but that truth
Must never pass these lips.

Mir. I hope Mandane
Doubts not my honest zeal—full well you know
I bear this tyrant deep and mortal hate;
That under him I list, and wear this garb
In hopes that some occasion may arrive,
When I may strike an unexpected blow,
And do my country right.

Man. Thy loyalty,
Thy truth and honour have been ever spotless.
Besides thy wrongs, thy countless wrongs, the wounds
He gave your injur'd family and name——

Mir. Alas! those wounds must still lie bleeding here,
Untented by the hand of time—Not all
His lenient arts, his favours heap'd upon me,

Shall cool the burning anguish of my soul.
What he, that slew my father!—dragg'd my sister,
Blooming in years, to his detested bed!—
Yes, tyrant, yes:—thy unextinguish'd foe
Dwells in this bosom. Surely then to me
Mandane may reveal her griefs—her wrongs
Will add new fuel to my hidden fires,
And make them burn more fiercely.———

Man. Urge no more——
My woes must rest conceal'd—yet should the tyrant
Learn from the captives of yon vanquish'd host,
That China's Orphan breathes the vital air,
And to himself unknown, within his breast
Unconscious bears the gen'rous glowing flame
Of all the virtues of his royal line;
Oh! should they know that the dear youth survives,
That for his righteous cause this war began,
Their fury then would kindle to a blaze,
Might wrap the world in flames, and in the ruin
My blameless son must perish!

Mir. Seek not thus
To multiply the ills that hover round you;
Nor from the stores of busy fancy add
New shafts to fortune's quiver. Zamti's care
Hath still deceiv'd suspicion's wakeful eye;
And o'er the Mandarine his manners pure,
And sacred function, have diffus'd an air
Of venerable awe, which e'en can teach
These northern foes to soften into men.

Man. Yes, Mirvan, yes—Religion wears a mien

In Zamti's person so severely mild,
That the fierce Scythian rests upon his spear,
And wonders what he feels! Such is the charm
Of heart-felt virtue; such is nature's force
That speaks abroad, and in rude northern hearts
Can stamp the image of an awful God.
From that source springs some hope:—Wretch that I am!
Hope idly flutters on my trembling tongue,
While Melancholy, brooding o'er her wrongs,
Lays waste the mind with horror and despair.
—What noise is that?——

Mir. Compose this storm of grief;
In ev'ry sound your fancy hears the Tartar——
Your husband this way bends——

Man. Celestial Pow'rs!
What lab'ring sighs heave in his breast?—what terror
Rolls in the patriot's eye?—haste, Mirvan, hence;
Again look out; gather the flying news,
And let me know each circumstance of ruin.

[*Exit* Mirvan.

Enter ZAMTI.

Man. Zamti!

Zamti. Mandane!

Man. Ah! what hast thou seen?
What hast thou heard?—Tell me---has fate decreed
The doom of China?

Zamti. China is no more!——
The eastern world is lost—this mighty empire
Falls with the universe beneath the stroke

Of savage force---falls from it's tow'ring hopes;
For ever, ever fall'n!
Man. Yet, why, ye Pow'rs!
Why should a tyrant, train'd to lust and murder,
A lawless ravager from savage wilds,
Where cheerful day ne'er dawns, but low'ring heav'n
For ever rolls a turbulence of clouds;
Why should a monster thus usurp the world,
And trample fair simplicity from ill
Beneath his ruffian feet?———
Zamti. Far hence, Mandane,
Those happy days, alas! are fled, when peace
Here nurs'd her blooming olives, and shed round
Her fost'ring influence.—In vain the plan
Of sacred laws, by hoary elders taught,
Laws founded on the base of public weal,
Gave lessons to the world. In vain Confucius
Unlock'd his radiant stores of moral truth;
In vain bright science, and each tender muse,
Beam'd ev'ry elegance on polish'd life———
Barbarian pow'r prevails. Whate'er our sages taught,
Or genius could inspire, must fade away,
And each fair virtue wither at the blast
Of northern domination.
Man. Fatal day!
More fatal e'en than that, which first beheld
This race accurs'd within these palace walls,
Since hope, that balm of wretched minds, is now
Irrevocably lost.———
Zamti. Name not the day,

Which saw this city sack'd—fresh stream my eyes,
Fresh bleeds my heart, whene'er the sad idea
Comes o'er my tortur'd mind. Why, cruel Pow'rs!
Why in that moment could not Zamti fall?

Man. Thy sanctity, the symbol of thy God,
Made ev'n the conqueror suspend his blow,
And murmur soft humanity. High Heav'n
Protected thee for its own great designs;
To save the royal child, the new-born babe,
From the dire slaughter of his ancient line.

Zamti. Yes, my Mandane, in that hour of carnage,
For purposes yet in the womb of time,
I was reserv'd. I was ordain'd to save
The infant boy; the dear, the precious charge,
The last of all my kings:---full twenty years
I've hid him from the world, and from himself,
And now I swear——Kneel we together here;
While in this dreadful pause our souls renew
Their solemn purpose.———— [*Both kneel.*
Thou all-gracious Being,
Whose tutelary care hath watch'd the fate
Of China's Orphan, who hast taught his steps
The paths of safety, still invelope him
In sev'nfold night, till your own hour is come;
Till your slow justice see the dread occasion
To rouse his soul, and bid him walk abroad
Vicegerent of your pow'r;---and if thy servant,
Or this his soft associate, e'er defeat
By any word or deed the great design,
Then straight may all your horrible displeasure

Be launch'd upon us from your red right arm,
And in one ruin dash us both together,
The blasted monuments of wrath.——

Man. That here
Mandane vows ne'er to betray his cause,
Be it enroll'd in the records of Heav'n! [*Both rise.*

Zamti. And now my heart more lightly beats; me-
With strength redoubled I can meet the shock [thinks
Of adverse fate,

Man. And lo! the trial comes——
For see where Etan mourns——See where the youth,
Unknowing of the storm that gathers o'er him,
Brings some new tale of woe.——

Enter ETAN.

Etan. My honour'd father,
And you, my helpless mother,---ah! where now,
Illustrious wretched pair, where will ye fly?
Where will your miseries now find a shelter?

Zamti. In virtue---I and this dear faithful woman—
We ask no more.

Man. Ah! quickly, Etan, say
What means that pallid look? What new event
Brings on the work of fate?——

Zamti. Say, does the tyrant
Return unglutted yet with blood?——

Etan. He does!
Ev'n now his triumph moves within the gates
In dread barbaric pomp:---t[illegible]iron swarms
Of Hyperboreans troop along[illegible]e streets,

Reeking from slaughter; while, from gazing crowds
Of their dire countrymen, an uproar wild
Of joy ferocious through th' astonish'd air
Howls like a northern tempest:---O'er the rest,
Proud in superior eminence of guilt,
The tyrant rides sublime.---Behind his car
The refuse of his sword, a captive train
Display their honest scars, and gnash their teeth
With rage and desperation.——

Man. Cruel fate!

Etan. With these a youth, distinguish'd from the rest,
Proceeds in sullen march. Heroic fire
Glows in his cheek, and from his ardent eye
Beams amiable horror.

Man. What of this youth?

Zamti. Be not alarm'd, Mandanes—What of him?

Etan. On him all eyes were fix'd with eager gaze,
As if their spirits, struggling to come forth,
Would strain each visual nerve—while thro' the crowd
A busy murmur ran---"If fame say right,
"Beneath that habit lurks a Prince; the last
"Of China's race."—The rumour spreads abroad
From man to man; and all with loud acclaim
Denounce their vengeance on him.——

Man. Ha! what say'st thou, Etan?
Heav'ns, how each black'ning hour in deeper horror
Comes charg'd with woe!

Zamti. It cannot be. Ye vain,
Ye groundless terrors, hence!—— [*Aside.*

Man. My honour'd lord,

Those eyes upturn'd to Heav'n, alas! in vain,
Declare your inward conflict.——

Zamti. Lov'd Mandane,
I pr'ythee leave me—but a moment leave me.——
Heed not the workings of a sickly fancy,
Wrought on by every popular report.
Thou know'st, with Morat I convey'd the infant
Far as the eastern point of Corea's realm;
There, where no human trace is seen, no sound
Assails the ear, save when the foaming surge
Breaks on the shelving beach, that there the youth
Might mock their busy search. Then check thy fears—
Retire, my love, awhile; I'll come anon—
And fortify thy soul with firm resolve,
Becoming Zamti's wife.——

Man. Yes, Zamti's wife
Shall never act unworthy of her lord!
Then hence I'll go, and satisfy each doubt
This youthful captive raises in my heart,
Quick panting with its fears. And O ye Pow'rs!
Protect my son, my husband, and my king!

[*Exit* Mandane.

Zamti. Come hither, Etan—thou perceiv'st the toils
That now incircle me.

Etan. Alas! too well
I see th' impending storm. But surely, Sir,
Should this young captive prove the royal Orphan,
You'll never own th' important truth.

Zamti. Dream not, young man,
To stand secure, yet blooming into life,

While vengeance hovers o'er your father's head.
The stock once fallen, each scyon must decay.
Etan. Then let me perish!—Witness for me, Heav'n,
Could Etan's fall appease the tyrant's wrath,
A willing victim he would yield his life,
And ask no greater boon of Heav'n.
Zamti. This zeal
So fervid in a stranger's cause———
Etan. A stranger!—he!—
My king a stranger!—Sir, you never meant it—
Perhaps you would explore the fiery seeds
Of Etan's temper, ever prompt to blaze
At Honour's sacred name. Perish the man,
Who, when his country calls him to defend
The rights of human kind, or bravely die,
Who then to glory dead can shrink aghast,
And hold a council with his abject fears!
Zamti. These tow'rings of the soul, alas! are vain.
I know the Tartar well—should I attempt
By any virtuous fraud to veil the truth,
His lion-rage again shall stalk abroad,
Again shall quaff the blood of innocence;
And for Zaphimri all the poor remains
Of China's matrons, and her hoary sires,
Her blooming virgins, and her lisping babes,
Shall yield their throats to the fell murd'rer's knife,
And all be lost for ever!
Etan. Then at once
Proclaim him to the world; each honest hand
Will grasp a sword, and, 'midst the circling guards,

Reach the usurper's heart—or should they fail,
Should overwhelming bands obstruct the deed,
They'll greatly dare to die!—better to die
With falling Liberty, than basely lead
An ignominious life. Zaphimri lost,
Ne'er shall fair Order dawn, but through the land
Slav'ry shall clank her chains, and violation,
Rapine, and murder riot at the will
Of lust and lawless pow'r.

Zamti. Thou brave young man,
Indulge my fond embrace—thy lovely ardour
It glads me thus to see!—To ease at once
Thy gen'rous fears,—the prince Zaphimri's safe;
Safe in my guardian care.

Etan. This pris'ner, Sir,
He does not then alarm you?

Zamti. No! from thence
I've nought to fear.

Etan. Oh! Sir, inform your son
Where is the royal heir?

Zamti. Seek not too soon
To know that truth—now I'll disclose the work,
The work of vengeance, which my lab'ring soul
Has long been fashioning. Ev'n at this hour
Stupendous ruin hovers o'er the heads
Of this accursed race.

Etan. Ruin!

Zamti. I'll tell thee———
When Timurkan led forth his savage bands,
Unpeopling this great city, I then seiz'd

The hour, to tamper with a chosen few,
Who have resolv'd, when the barbarians lie
Buried in sleep and wine, and hotly dream
Their havock o'er again—then, then, my son,
In one collected blow to burst upon 'em; [horror
Like their own northern clouds, whose midnight
Impending o'er the world, at length breaks forth
In the vaunt lightning's blaze, in storms and thunder
Through all the red'ning air, till frighted Nature
Start from her couch, and waken to a scene
Of uproar and destruction.

Etan. Oh! my father,
The glorious enterprize!

Zamti. Mark me, young man.
Seek thou my friends, Orasming and Zimventi:
In the dim holy cloisters of yon temple
Thou'lt find them musing.—Near Osmingti's tomb
I charge they all convene,—and there do thou
Await my coming—bid them ne'er remit
Their high heroic ardour; let them know,
Whate'er shall fall on this old mould'ring clay,
The tyrant never shall subdue my mind.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Enter ZAMTI.

Zamti.

DREAM on, deluded tyrant! yes, dream on
In blind security!—whene'er high Heav'n

Means to destroy, it curses with illusion,
With error of the mind.—Yes, wreak thy fury
Upon this captive youth;—whoe'er he is,
If from his death this groaning empire rise,
Once more itself, resplendent, rich in arts
That humanize the world,—he pays a debt
Due to his King, his Country, and his God.
His father,—wheresoe'er he dwell,—in tears
Shall tell the glory on his boy deriv'd;
And ev'n his mother, 'midst her matron shrieks,
Shall bless the childbed pang that brought him forth
To this great lot, by fate to few allow'd!——
What wouldst thou, Mirvan?

Enter MIRVAN.

Mir. Eagerly without
A rev'rend stranger craves access to Zamti:
His head hoary with age, with galling tears
His eyes suffus'd; his ev'ry look impatience——
Zamti. Give him admittance—— [*Exit* Mirvan
——How my spirits rush
Tumultuous to my heart—what may this mean?
Lo! where he comes——

Enter MORAT.

Morat. Zamti!——
Zamti. Ha!—through the veil
Of age, that face—that mien—Morat!——
Morat. Oh! Zamti!
Let me once more embrace thee——

Zamti. Good old man! [*They embrace.*
But wherefore art thou here?—what of my boy?
Morat. Ah! what indeed?—Ev'n from the ocean's margin,
Parch'd with the sun, or chill'd with midnight damps,
O'er hills, and rocks, and dreary continents,
In vain I've follow'd———
Zamti. Why didst let him forth?
Morat. Think not thy Morat urg'd him to the deed.
His valour was the cause; and soon as fame
Proclaim'd the prince alive, the mighty din
Of preparation through all Corea's realm
Alarm'd his breast—Indignant of controul
He burst his covert, and now, hapless youth—
Zamti. Ah!—dead!—in battle fall'n!———
Morat. Alas! ev'n now
He drags the conqu'ror's chain.
Zamti. Mandane then
May still embrace her son!—My boy may live,
To know the sweets of freedom ere he die.
Morat. Alas! the measure of your woes is full!
Unconscious of our frauds, the tyrant thinks
The prince his pris'ner in your son.
Zamti. Ah! Morat! [Zamti.
Morat. Wild through the streets the foe calls out on
Thee they pronounce the author of this fraud;
And on your Hamet threaten instant vengeance.
Zamti. There was but this—but this, ye cruel Pow'rs,
And this you've heap'd upon me! Was it not

Enough to tear him from his mother's arms—
Doom'd for his prince to wander o'er the world?
—Alas! what needed more?—Fond foolish eyes,
Stop your unbidden gush—tear, tear me piecemeal—
—No, I will not complain—but whence on him
Could that suspicion glance?

Morat. This very morn,
Ere yet the battle join'd, a faithful messenger,
Who through the friendly gloom of night had held
His darkling way, and pass'd the Tartar's camp,
Brought me advices from the Corean chief,
That soon as Hamet join'd the warlike train,
His story he related. Straight the gallant leader
With open arms receiv'd him—knew him for thy son,
In secret knew him, nor reveal'd he aught
That touch'd his birth. But still the busy voice
Of Fame, increasing as she goes, through all the ranks
Babbled abroad each circumstance. By thee
How he was privately convey'd—sent forth
A tender infant to be rear'd in solitude,
A stranger to himself!—The warriors saw
With what a graceful port he mov'd in arms,
An early hero!—deem'd him far above
The common lot of life—deem'd him Zaphimri,
And all with reverential awe beheld him.
This, this, my Zamti, reach'd the tyrant's ear,
And rises into horrid proof.

Zamti. If so,
Oh! what a sacrifice must now be made! [*Aside.*

Morat. But when the secret shall be known——

Zamti. Oh! Morat!
Does thy poor bleeding country still remain
Dear to thy heart?—Say, dost thou still revere
That holy Pow'r above, Supreme of beings,
Mistaken by the Bonzée, whom our fathers
Worshipp'd in happier days?

Morat. He—only he
For twenty years hath given me strength in exile.

Zamti. Then bending here, before his awful throne,
Swear, what I now unfold, shall ever lie
In sacred silence wrapp'd.

Morat. I swear!

Zamti. Now mark me——— [task,
Morat—my son—[*Turning aside.*]—Oh! cruel, cruel
To conquer nature while the heart-strings break!

Morat. Why heave those sighs? and why that burst of grief?

Zamti. My son—his guiltless blood—I cannot speak!
[*Bursts into tears.*

Morat. Ha!—Wilt thou shed his blood?

Zamti. Thou wretched father!—— [*Half aside.*

Morat. Oh! had you known the virtues of the youth,
His truth, his courage, his enlighten'd mind———

Zamti. I pr'ythee urge no more—here Nature's voice
Speaks in such pleadings:—such reproaches, Morat,
—Here in my very heart—give woundings here,
Thou cans't not know, and only parents feel!

Morat. And wilt thou, cruel in thy tears———

Zamti. Nay cease,

In pity to a father, cease—Think, Morat—
Think of Zaphimri!

Morat. Ah! how fares the prince?

Zamti. He fares, my Morat, like a God on earth,
Unknowing his celestial origin:
Yet quick, intense, and bursting into action;
His great heart lab'ring with—he knows not what—
Prodigious deeds!—Deeds, which ere long shall rouse,
Astonish, and alarm the world.

Morat. What mean
Those mystic sounds?

Zamti. Revenge, conquest, and freedom!——

Morat. Conquest and freedom!

Zamti. Ay! conquest and freedom!
The midnight hour shall call a chosen band
Of hidden patriots forth; who, when the foe
Sinks down in drunken revelry, shall pour
The gather'd rage of twenty years upon him,
And vindicate the eastern world.

Morat. By Heav'n!
The news revives my soul.

Zamti. And can'st thou think,
To save one vulgar life, that Zamti now
Will mar the vast design? No; let him bleed,
Let my boy bleed!—in such a cause as this
I can resign my son—with tears of joy
Resign him!—and one complicated pang
Shall wrench him from my heart.——
The conqu'ror comes! [*Warlike music within.*
This is no hour for parlying—Morat, hence,

And leave me to my fix'd resolve.

Morat. Yet think,
Think of some means to save your Hamet.

Zamti. Oh!
It cannot be—the soul of Timurkan
Is bold and stirring: when occasion calls,
He springs aloft, like an expanding fire,
And marks his way with ruin. Now he knows
Zaphimri lives, his fear will make him daring
Beyond his former crimes—for joy and riot
Which this day's triumph brings, remorseless rage
And massacre succeed—and all our hopes
Are blasted for an unimportant boy.

[*A second flourish.*

Morat. That nearer sound proclaims his dread approach.
Yet once more, Zamti, think——

Zamti. No more—I'll send
Those shall conduct thee where Orasming lives.
There dwell unseen of all. But, Morat, first
Seek my Mandane. Heav'ns! how shall I bear
Her strong impetuosity of grief,
When she shall know my fatal purpose? Thou
Prepare her tender spirit; sooth her mind,
And save, oh! save me from that dreadful conflict!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Two large Folding-gates in the back-scene are burst open by the Tartars, *and then enter* TIMURKAN, *with his Train.*

Timur. Hail to this regal dome, this gorgeous palace!
Where this inventive race have lavish'd all
Their elegance:—ye gay apartments, hail!
Beneath your storied roof, where mimic life
Glows to the eye, and at the painter's touch
A new creation lives along the walls;
Once more receive a conqueror, arriv'd
From rougher scenes, where stern rebellion dar'd
Draw forth his phalanx; till this warlike arm
Hurl'd desolation on his falling ranks,
And now the monster, in yon field of death,
Lies overwhelm'd in ruin.

Octar. There he fell,
No more to stalk thy realm: the eastern world,
From this auspicious day, beneath your feet
Lies bound in adamantine chains.

Timur. Thus, Octar,
Shall Timurkan display his conqu'ring banners,
From high Samarcand's walls, to where the Tanais
Devolves his icy tribute to the sea.

Octar. But first this captive prince!—

Timur. Yes, Octar, first
Zaphimri gluts my rage—bring him before us—first
We'll crush the seeds of dark conspiracy;

For Zamti—he, that false insidious slave,
Shall dearly pay his treasons.

Octar. Zamti's crimes
'Twere best to leave unpunished:—vers'd in wiles
Of sly hypocrisy, he wins the love
Of the deluded multitude. 'Twould seem,
Should we inflict that death his frauds deserve,
As if we meant destruction to their faith:
When a whole people's minds are once inflam'd
For their religious rights, their fury burns
With rage more dreadful, as the source is holy. [art

Timur. Octar, thou reason'st right:—henceforth my
To make this stubborn race receive the yoke,
Shall be by yielding to their softer manners,
Their vesture, laws, and customs: thus to blend
And make the whole one undistinguish'd people.
The boy comes forth in sullen mood—what passions
Swell in his breast in vain!———

Enter HAMET, *in Chains.*

Timur. Thou art the youth,
Who mow'd our battle down, and flesh'd your sword
In many a slaughter'd Tartar.

Hamet. True; I am. [hew

Timur. Too well I mark'd thy rage, and saw thee
A wasteful passage through th' embattled plain.

Hamet. Then be thou witness for me, in that hour
I never shunn'd your thickest war; and if
In yonder field, where my poor countrymen
In mangled heaps lie many a rood extended,

Kind fate had doom'd me to a noble fall,
With this right arm I earn'd it.

Timur. Say, what motive
Unsheath'd thy rebel blade, and bad thee seek
These wars?

Hamet. The love of honourable deeds,
The groans of bleeding China, and the hate
Of tyrants.

Timur. Ha!—take heed, rash youth—I see
This lesson has been taught thee. Octar, haste,
Seek me the Mandarine: let him forthwith [words!
Attend me here. [*Exit* Octar.] Now tremble at my
Thy motive to these wars is known—thou art
Zamphimri.

Hamet. I Zaphimri!

Timur. False one, yes:
Thou art Zaphimri—thou!—whom treach'rous guile
Stole from my rage, and sent to distant wilds,
Till years and horrid counsel should mature thee
For war and wild commotion.

Hamet. I the Prince!
The last of China's race! Nay mock not majesty,
Nor with the borrow'd robes of sacred kings
Dress up a wretch like me—Were I Zaphimri,
Think'st thou thy trembling eye could bear the shock
Of a much-injur'd king? Could'st thou sustain it?
Say, could'st thou bear to view a royal Orphan,
Whose father, mother, brother, sisters, all
Thy murd'rous arm hath long since laid in dust?
Whose native crown on thy ignoble brow

Thou dar'st dishonour?—whose wide-wasted country
Thy arms have made a wilderness?

Timur. I see
Thou hast been tutor'd in thy lone retreat
By some sententious pedant. Soon these vain,
These turgid maxims shall be all subdued
By thy approaching death.

Hamet. Let death come on:
Guilt, guilt alone shrinks back appall'd—the brave
And honest still defy his dart;—the wise
Calmly can eye his frown;—and misery
Invokes his friendly aid to end her woes. [fears,

Timur. Thy woes, presumptuous youth, with all my
Shall soon lie buried.

Enter ZAMTI.

Timur. Now, pious false one, say, who is that youth?

Zamti. His air, his features, and his honest mien
Proclaim all fair within. But, mighty Sir,
I know him not.

Timur. Take heed, old man, nor dare,
As thou dost dread my pow'r, to practise guile
Beneath a mask of sacerdotal perfidy:
Priestcraft, I think, calls it a pious fraud.

Zamti. Priestcraft and sacerdotal perfidy
To me are yet unknown. Religion's garb
Here never serves to consecrate a crime:
We have not yet, thank Heav'n, so far imbib'd
The vices of the north!

Timur. Thou vile impostor!

Avow Zaphimri, whom thy treach'rous arts
Conceal'd from justice; or else desolation
Again shall ravage this devoted land.

Zamti. Alas! full well thou know'st, that arm already
Hath shed all royal blood.

Timur. Traitor, 'tis false!——
By thee, vile slave, I have been wrought to think
The hated race destroy'd: thy artful tale
Abus'd my cred'lous ear. But know, at length
Some captive slaves, by my command impal'd,
Have own'd the horrid truth;—have own'd they fought
To seat Zaphimri on the throne of China.
Hear me, thou froward boy;—dar'st thou be honest,
And answer who thou art?

Hamet. Dare I be honest?
I dare!—a mind grown up in native honour
Dares not be otherwise—then if thy troops
Ask from the lightning of whose blade they fled,
Tell 'em 'twas Hamet's.

Zamti. 'Tis—it is my son!——
My boy—my Hamet!—— [*Aside.*

Timur. Where was your abode?

Hamet. Far hence remote, in Corea's happy realm,
Where the first beams of day with orient blushes
Tinge the salt wave: there on the sea-beat shore
A cavern'd rock yielded a lone retreat
To virtuous Morat.

Zamti. Oh! ill-fated youth! [*Aside.*

Hamet. The pious hermit in that moss-grown dwelling
Found an asylum from heart-piercing woes,

Mr. BENSON as TIMURKAN
Traitor 'tis false! —

London, Printed for G. Cawthorn, British Library, Strand. Feb.a.1797.

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ASTOR, LENOX AND
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R L

From slav'ry, and that restless din of arms
With which thy fell ambition shook the world,
There too the sage nurtur'd my greener years;
With him and contemplation have I walk'd
The paths of wisdom: what the great Confucius
Of moral beauty taught, whate'er the wise,
Still wooing knowledge in her secret haunts,
Disclos'd of Nature to the sons of men,
My wond'ring mind has heard:—but above all,
The hermit taught me the most useful science,
That noble science, to be Brave and Good.

Zamti. Oh! lovely youth!—at ev'ry word he utters,
A soft effusion mix'd of grief and joy
Flows o'er my heart! [*Aside.*

Timur. Who, said he, was your father?

Hamet. My birth the pious sage—I know not why—
Still wrapp'd in silence; and when urg'd to tell,
He only answer'd that a time might come,
I should not blush to know my father.

Timur. Now
With truth declare, hast thou ne'er heard of Zamti?

Hamet. Of Zamti!—Oft enraptur'd with his name,
My heart has glow'd within me as I heard
The praises of the godlike man.

Timur. Thou slave, [*To* Zamti.
Each circumstance arraigns thy guilt!

Hamet. Oh! Heav'ns!
Can that be Zamti?

Timur. Yes, that is the traitor.

Hamet. Let me adore his venerable form,

Thus on my knees adore———

Zamti. I cannot look upon him,
Lest tenderness dissolve my feeble pow'rs,
And wrest my purpose from me—— [*Aside.*

Timur. Hence, vain boy!
Thou specious traitor!—thou false hoary moralist!
[*To* Zamti.
Confusion has o'erta'en thy subtle frauds.
To make my crown's assurance firm, that none
Hereafter shall aspire to wrench it from me,
Now own your fancied king; or, by yon heav'n,
To make our vengeance sure, through all the east
Each youth shall die, and carnage thin mankind,
Till in the gen'ral wreck your boasted Orphan
Shall undistinguish'd fall. Thou know'st my word
Is fate. Octar, draw near—when treason lurks,
Each moment's big with danger—thou observe
These my commands—— [*Talks apart to* Octar.

Zamti. Now virtuous cruelty repress my tears!
Cease your soft conflict, Nature! Hear me, Tartar:
That youth—his air—his ev'ry look unmans me quite.

Timur. Wilt thou begin, dissembler?

Zamti. Down, down, down———
It must be so, or all is lost—That youth,
I've dealt by him—as ev'ry king could wish
In a like case his faithful subjects would.

Timur. Dost thou then own it? Triumph, Timurkan,
And in Zaphimri's grave lie hush'd my fears!
Brave Octar, let the victim straight be led
To yonder sacred fane: there, in the view

Of my rejoicing Tartars, the declining sun
Shall see him offered to our living Lama,
For this day's conquest:—thence a golden train
Of radiant years shall mark my future sway. [*Exit.*

Zamti. Flow, flow, my tears, and ease this aching breast!

Hamet. Nay, do not weep for me, thou good old man.
If it will close the wounds of bleeding China,
That a poor wretch like me must yield his life,
I give it freely. If I am a king,
Though sure it cannot be, what greater blessing
Can a young prince enjoy, than to diffuse,
By one great act, that happiness on millions,
For which his life should be a round of care?
Come, lead me to my fate. [*Exit with* Octar, *&c.*

Zamti. Hold, hold, my heart!
My gallant, gen'rous youth! Mandane's air,
His mother's dear resemblance rives my soul.

Man. [*Within.*] Oh! let me fly, and find the barb'rous man!——
Where—where is Zamti?

Zamti. Ha! 'tis Mandane——
Wild as the winds, the mother all alive
In ev'ry heart-string, the forlorn one comes
To claim her boy!

Enter MANDANE.

Man. And can it then be true?
Is human nature exil'd from thy breast?
Art thou indeed so barb'rous?

Zamti. Lov'd Mandane,
Fix not your scorpions here; a bearded shaft
Already drinks my spirits up.
Man. I've seen
The trusty Morat---Oh! I've heard it all!---
He would have shunn'd my steps; but what can 'scape
The eye of tenderness like mine?
Zamti. By heav'n
I cannot speak to thee!
Man. Think'st thou those tears,
Those false, those cruel tears, will choak the voice
Of a fond mother's love, now stung to madness?
Oh! I will rend the air with lamentations,
Root up this hair, and beat this throbbing breast,
Turn all connubial joys to bitterness,
To fell despair, to anguish and remorse,
Unless my son——
Zamti. Thou ever faithful woman,
Oh! leave me to my woes!
Man. Give me my child,
Thou worse than Tartar! give me back my son!
Oh! give him to a mother's eager arms,
And let me strain him to my heart!
Zamti. Heav'n knows
How dear my boy is here!---But our first duty
Now claims attention---to our country's love
All other tender fondnesses must yield:—
---I was a subject ere I was a father.
Man. You were a savage bred in Scythian wilds,
And humanizing pity never reach'd

Your heart.---Was it for this---oh! thou unkind one!
Was it for this---oh! thou inhuman father!
You woo'd me to your nuptial bed?---So long
Have I then clasp'd thee in these circling arms,
And made this breast your pillow?---Cruel, say,
Are these your vows?—are these your fond endear-
Nay, look upon me---if this wasted form, [ments?
These faded eyes have turned your heart against me,
With grief for you I wither'd in my bloom.

Zamti. Why wilt thou pierce my heart?

Man. Alas! my son,
Have I then bore thee in these matron arms,
To see thee bleed?---Thus dost thou then return?
This could your mother hope, when first she sent
Her infant exile to a distant clime?
Ah! could I think thy early love of fame
Would urge thee to this peril?—thus to fall,
By a stern father's will—by thee to die!---
From thee, inhuman, to receive his doom!---
---Murder'd by thee!—Yet hear me, Zamti, hear me---
Thus on my knees---I threaten now no more---
'Tis Nature's voice that pleads--Nature alarm'd,
Quick, trembling, wild, touch'd to her inmost feeling,
When force would tear her tender young ones from her.

Zamti. Nay, seek not with enfeebling fond ideas
To swell the flood of grief---it is in vain---
He must submit to fate!

Man. Barbarian! no--- [*She rises hastily.*
He shall not die---rather---I prithee, Zamti,
Urge not a grief distracted woman:---tremble

At the wild fury of a mother's love!

Zamti. I tremble rather at a breach of oaths.
But thou break thine---bathe your perfidious hands
In this life-blood—betray the righteous cause
Of all our sacred kings.

Man. Our kings!---our kings!—
What are the scepter'd rulers of the world?---
Form'd of one common clay, are they not all
Doom'd with each subject, with the meanest slave,
To drink the cup of human woe?---alike
All level'd by affliction?---Sacred kings!—
'Tis human policy sets up their claim—
Mine is a mother's cause——mine is the cause
Of husband, wife, and child:---those tend'rest ties!
Superior to your right divine of kings!—— [woman,

Zamti. Then go, Mandane—thou once faithful
Dear to this heart in vain:---go, and forget
Those virtuous lessons, which I oft have taught thee,
In fond credulity, while on each word
You hung enamour'd.---Go, to Timurkan
Reveal the awful truth.---Be thou spectatress
Of murder'd majesty.---Embrace your son,
And let him lead in shame and servitude
A life ignobly bought.---Then let those eyes,
Those faded eyes, which grief for me hath dimm'd,
With guilty joy re-animate their lustre,
To brighten slavery, and beam their fires
On the fell Scythian murderer.

Man. And is it thus,
Thus is Mandane known?---My soul disdains

The vile imputed guilt.---No---never---never---
Still am I true to fame. Come lead me hence,
Where I may lay down life to save Zaphimri,
---But save my Hamet too.---Then, then you'll find
A heart beats here, as warm and great as thine. [effort,

Zamti. Then make with me one strong, one glorious
And rank with those, who, from the first of time,
In Fame's eternal archives stand rever'd,
For conqu'ring all the dearest ties of Nature,
To serve the gen'ral weal.

Man. That savage virtue
Loses with me its horrid charms.---I've sworn
To save my king.---But should a mother turn
A dire assassin?---oh! I cannot bear
The piercing thought!---Distraction, quick distraction
Will seize my brain.—Think thou behold'st my Hamet,
The dear, the lovely youth, my blooming hero!---
Think thou behold'st him---See!---my child!---my child!
By guards surrounded, a devoted victim!--- [
Barbarian, hold!---ah! see, he dies!---he dies!---

[*She faints into* Zamti's *arms.*

Zamti. Where is Arsace?---Fond maternal love
Shakes her weak frame---

Enter ARSACE.

Quickly, Arsace, help
This ever-tender creature.---Wand'ring life
Rekindles in her cheek.---Soft, lead her off
To where the fanning breeze in yonder bow'r,
May woo her spirits back.---Propitious Heav'n!

Pity the woundings of a father's heart!
Pity my strugglings with this best of women!
Support our virtue!---kindle in our souls
A ray of your divine enthusiasm;
Such as inflames the patriot's breast, and lifts
Th' impassion'd mind to that sublime of virtue,
That even on the rack it feels the good,
Which, in a single hour, it works for millions,
And leaves the legacy to after times!

[*Exit, leading off* Mandane.

ACT III. SCENE I.

A Temple. Several Tombs up and down the Stage.

Enter MORAT.

THIS is the place——these the long winding isles,
The solemn arches, whose religious awe
Attunes the mind to melancholy musing,
Such as befits free men reduc'd to slaves.—
Here Zamti meets his friends——amid these tombs,
Where lie the sacred manes of our kings,
They pour their orisons——hold converse here
With the illustrious shades of murder'd heroes,
And meditate a great revenge——*(a groan is heard)*—
a groan!
The burst of anguish from some care-worn wretch
That sorrows o'er his country——ha! 'tis Zamti!

ZAMTI *comes out of a tomb.*

Zamti, Who's he that seeks these mansions of the dead?

Morat. The friend of Zamti and of China.

Zamti. Morat!

Come to my arms, thou good, thou best of men——
I have been weeping o'er the sacred reliques
Of a dear murder'd king---Where are our friends?
Hast seen Orasming?

Morat. Through these vaults of death
Lonely he wanders, plung'd in deep despair.

Zamti. Hast thou not told him?---hast thou nought
Touching Zaphimri? [reveal'd

Morat. There I wait thy will——

Zamti. Oh! thou art ever faithful!—on thy lips
Sits pensive Silence, with her hallow'd finger,
Guarding the pure recesses of thy mind.——
But, lo! they come.

Enter ORASMING, ZIMVENTI, *and others.*

Zamti. Droop ye, my gallant friends?

Oras. Oh! Zamti, all is lost!---Our dreams of liberty
Are vanish'd into air.——Nought now avails
Integrity of life.——Ev'n Heav'n, combin'd
With lawless might, abandon us and Virtue. [thus

Zamti. Can your great souls thus shrink within ye?
From heroes will ye dwindle into slaves?

Oras. Oh! could you give us back Zaphimri!---then
Danger would smile, and lose it's face of horror.

Zamti. What---would his presence fire ye?

Oras. 'Twould, by Heav'n! [yoke.

Zim. This night should free us from the Tartar's

Zamti. Then mark the care of the all-gracious Gods!

This youthful captive, whom in chains they hold,
Is not Zaphimri.———

Oras. } Not Zaphimri!
Zim. }

Zamti. No!

Unconscious of himself, and to the world unknown,
He walks at large among us.

Oras. Heav'nly Pow'rs!——

Zamti. This night, my friends, this very night to rise
Refulgent from a blow, that frees us all—
From the usurper's fate!——the first of men,
Deliv'rer of his country!——

Oras. Mighty Gods!
Can this be possible?

Zamti. It is most true.
I'll bring him to ye straight---*(calling to* Etan, *within the tomb)* what ho!——come forth——
You seem transfix'd with wonder---oh! my friends,
Watch all the motions of your rising spirit,
Direct your ardour, when anon you hear
What fate, long pregnant with the vast event,
Is lab'ring into birth.

ETAN [*comes out of the tomb.*] Each step I move
A deeper horror sits on all the tombs;
Each shrine, each altar seems to shake, as if
Conscious of some important crisis.

Zamti. Yes;
A crisis, great indeed, is now at hand!
Heav'n holds it's golden balance forth, and weighs
Zaphimri's and the Tartar's destiny,

While hov'ring angels tremble round the beam.—
Hast thou beheld that picture?
Etan. Fix'd attention
Hath paus'd on ev'ry part; yet still to me
It shadows forth the forms of things unknown;
All imag'ry obscure, and wrapp'd in darkness.
Zamti. That darkness my informing breath shall clear,
As morn dispels the night. Lo! here display'd
This mighty kingdom's fall.———
Etan. Alas! my father,
At sight of these sad colourings of woe,
Our tears will mix with honest indignation.
Zamti. Nay, but survey it closer——see that child,
That royal infant, the last sacred relict
Of China's ancient line——see where a mandarine
Conveys the babe to his wife's fost'ring breast,
There to be nourish'd in an humble state;
While their own son is sent to climes remote;
That, should the dire usurper e'er suspect
The Prince alive, he in his stead might bleed,
And mock the murd'rer's rage.
Etan. Amazement thrills
Through all my frame, and my mind, big with wonder,
Feels ev'ry pow'r suspended!
Zamti. Rather say
That strong imagination burns within thee—
Dost thou not feel a more than common ardour?—
Etan. By heav'n my soul dilates with some new impulse;
Some strange inspir'd emotion——Would the hour

Of fate were come!——this night my dagger's hilt
I'll bury in the tyrant's heart.

Zamti. Wilt thou?

Etan. By all the mighty dead, that round us lie,
By all who this day groan in chains, I will. [Prince

Zamti. And when thou dost—then tell him 'tis the
That strikes.

Etan. The Prince's wrongs shall nerve my arm
With tenfold rage.

Zamti. Nay, but the Prince himself!

Etan. What says my father?

Zamti. Thou art China's Orphan;
The last of all our kings——no longer Etan,
But now Zaphimri!

Zaph. Ha!

Oras. O wondrous hand
Of Heav'n!

Zaph. A crowd of circumstances rise——
Thy frequent hints obscure——thy pious care
To train my youth to greatness.—Lend your aid
To my astonish'd pow'rs, that feebly bear
This unexpected shock of royalty! [strength,

Zamti. Thou noble youth, now put forth all your
And let Heav'n's vengeance brace each sinew.

Zaph. Vengeance!
That word has shot it's lightning through my soul.—
But tell me, Zamti—still 'tis wonder all---
Am I indeed the Royal Orphan?

Zamti. Thou——
Thou art the king, whom, as my humble son,

I've nurtur'd in humanity and virtue.
Thy foes could never think to find thee here,
Ev'n in the lion's den; and therefore here
I've fix'd thy safe asylum, while my son
Hath dragg'd his life in exile.—Oh! my friends,
Morat will tell ye all—each circumstance.
Mean time——there is your king!

[*All kneel to him.*

Oras. } Long live the Father of the Eastern
Zim. } World!

Zamti. Sole governor of earth!——

Zaph. All-ruling Pow'rs!

Is then a great revenge for all the wrongs
Of Bleeding China—are the fame and fate
Of all posterity included here
Within my bosom? [*They all rise.*

Zamti. Yes; they are:—the shades
Of your great ancestors now rise before thee,
Heroes and demi-gods:——Aloud they call
For the fell Tartar's blood.

Zaph. Oh! Zamti! all
That can alarm the pow'rs of man, now stirs
In this expanding breast——

Zamti. Anon to burst
With hideous ruin on the foe.—My gallant heroes,
Are our men station'd at their posts?

Oras. They are.

Zamti. Is ev'ry gate secur'd?

Oras. All safe.

Zamti. The signal fix'd?

Oras. It is.—Will Mirvan join us?

Zamti. Doubt him not.

In bitterness of soul he counts his wrongs,
And pants for vengeance—would have join'd ye here,
But, favour'd as he is, his post requires him
About the Tartar's person. The assault begun,
He'll turn his arms upon th' astonish'd foe,
And add new horrors to the wild commotion.

Zaph. Now bloody spoiler, now thy hour draws nigh,
And ere the dawn thy guilty reign shall end. [friends,

Zamti. How my heart burns within me!—Oh! my
Call now to mind the scene of desolation,
Which Timurkan, in one accursed hour,
Heap'd on this groaning land!—Ev'n now I see
The savage bands, o'er reeking hills of dead,
Forcing their rapid way.—I see them urge
With rage unhallow'd to this sacred temple,
Where good Osmintgi, with his queen and children,
Fatigu'd the Gods averse. See where Arphisa,
Rending the air with agonizing shrieks,
Tears her dishevell'd hair:—then, with a look
Fix'd on her babes, grief chokes its passage up,
And all the feelings of a mother's breast
Throbbing in one mix'd pang, breathless she faints
Within her husband's arms. Adown his cheek,
In copious streams fast flow'd the manly sorrow,
While clust'ring round his knees his little offspring,
In tears all-eloquent, with arms outstretch'd,
Sue for parental aid.———

Zaph. Go on—the tale

Will fit me for a scene of horror.

Zamti. Oh! my prince,
The charge, which your great father gave me still
Sounds in my ear. Ere yet the foe burst in,
'Zamti,' said he—Ah! that imploring eye!
That agonizing look!—
'Preserve my little boy, my cradled infant—
'Shield him from ruffians—train his youth to Virtue:—
'Virtue will rouse him to a great revenge;
'Or failing, Virtue shall still make him happy.'
He could no more—the cruel spoiler seiz'd him,
And dragg'd my king—my ever honour'd king—
The father of his people—basely dragg'd him
By his white rev'rend locks, from yonder altar,
Here—on the blood-stain'd pavement; while the queen,
And her dear fondlings, in one mangled heap,
Died in each other's arms!

Zaph. Revenge! revenge!
With more than lion's nerve I'll spring upon him,
And at one blow relieve the groaning world.
Let us this moment carry sword and fire
To yon devoted walls, and whelm him down
In ruin and dismay.

Zamti. Zaphimri, no.
By rashness you may mar a noble cause.
To you, my friends, I render up my charge—
To you I give your king. Farewel, my sov'reign!—

Zaph. Thou good, thou godlike man!—a thousand
Of warmest friendship—all the tendencies [feelings
Of heart-felt gratitude are struggling here,

And fain would speak to thee, my more than father!
—Farewel!---sure we shall meet again!

Zamti. We shall——

Zaph. Farewel!---Zamti, farewel!—[*Embraces him*]—
Orasming, now
The noblest duty calls us. Now remember
We are the men, whom from all human kind
Our fate hath now selected, to come forth
Asserters of the public weal;---to drench our swords
In the oppressor's heart;—to do a deed
Which Heav'n, intent on it's own holy work,
Shall pause with pleasure to behold.

[*Exit, with Conspirators.*

Zamti. May the Most High
Pour down his blessings on him! and anon,
In the dead waste of night, when awful Justice
Walks with her crimson steel o'er slaughter'd heaps
Of groaning Tartars, may he then direct
His youthful footsteps through the paths of peril!
Oh may he guide the horrors of the storm,
An angel of your wrath, to point your vengeance
On ev'ry guilty head! Then---then, 'twill be enough,
When you have broken the oppressor's rod,
Your reign will then be manifest---Mankind will see
That truth and goodness still obtain your care——

[*A dead march.*

What mean those deathful sounds?--Again!--They lead
My boy to slaughter!---Oh! look down, ye heavens!
Look down propitious!—Teach me to subdue
That nature which ye gave!——— [*Exit.*

A dead March. Enter HAMET, OCTAR, *Guards*, &c.

Octar. Here let the victim fall, and with his blood
Wash his forefathers' tomb. Here ends the hated race—
The eastern world, through all her wide domain,
Shall then submissive feel the Scythian yoke,
And yield to Timurkan.

Hamet. [*Standing by the tomb.*] Where is the tyrant?
I would have him see,
With envy see, th' unconquer'd pow'r of Virtue;
How it can calmly bleed, smile on his racks,
And with strong pinion soar above his pow'r,
To regions of perennial day.

Octar. The father
Of the whole eastern world shall mark thee well,
When at to-morrow's dawn thy breathless corse
Is borne through all our streets for public view.
It now befits thee to prepare for death.

Hamet. I am prepar'd. I have no lust or rapine,
No murders to repent of. Undismay'd
I can behold all-judging Heav'n, whose hand
Still compassing it's wondrous ends, by means
Inextricable to all mortal clue,
Hath now inclos'd me in it's awful maze.
Since 'tis by your decree that thus beset
Th' inexorable angel hovers o'er me,
Be your great bidding done!

Octar. The sabre's edge
Thirsts for his blood—then let it's lightning fall
On his aspiring head. [*Guards seize* Hamet.

Man. [*within*] Off—set me free!—inhuman, barb'rous ruffians!——

Octar. What means that woman with dishevell'd hair,
And wild extravagance of woe?——

Man. My griefs
Scorn all restraint---I must---I will have way!
[*She enters, and throws herself on her knees.*
Me—me—on me convert your rage—plunge deep,
Deep in this bosom your abhorred steel,
But spare his precious life!

Octar. Hence, quickly bear
This wild, this frantic woman.

Man. Never, never——
You shall not force me hence. Here will I cling
Fast to the earth, and rivet here my hands,
In all the fury of the last despair!
He is my child!——my dear, dear son!

Octar. How, woman!
Saidst thou your son?

Man. Yes, Octar, mine;---my son,
My boy—my Hamet! [*she rises, and embraces him.*] Let my eager love
Fly all unbounded to him---oh! my child!---my child!

Octar. Suspend the stroke, ye ministers of death,
Till Timurkan hear of this new event.
Mean time, thou, Mirvan, speed in quest of Zamti,
And let him answer here this wondrous tale. [*Exit.*

Mir. The time demands his presence; or despair
May wring each secret from her tender breast. [*Aside.*
And then our glorious, fancied pile of freedom,

At one dire stroke, shall tumble into nought. [*Exit.*

Man. Why did'st thou dare return?---ah! rather
Did'st thou so long defer, with ev'ry grace,
And ev'ry growing virtue, thus to raise
Your mother's dear delight to rapture?

Hamet. Lost
In the deep mists of darkling ignorance,
To me my birth's unknown---but sure that look,
Those tears, those shrieks, that animated grief
Defying danger, all declare th' effect
Of Nature's strugglings in a parent's heart.
Then let me pay my filial duty here,
Kneel to her native dignity, and pour
In tears of joy the transport of a son!

Man. Thou art, thou art my son!—thy father's face,
His ev'ry feature, blooming in his boy!
Oh! tell me, tell me all—how hast thou liv'd
With faithful Morat?—how did he support
In dreary solitude thy tender years?—
How train thy growing mind?—oh! quickly tell me,
Oh! tell me all, and charm me with thy tongue!

Hamet. Mysterious Pow'rs! have I then liv'd to this,
In th' hour of peril thus to find a parent,
In virtue firm, majestic in distress,
At length to feel unutterable bliss
In her dear circling arms——— [*They embrace.*

Enter TIMURKAN, OCTAR, *&c.*

Timur. Where is this wild
Outrageous woman, who with headlong grief

Suspends my dread command?---Tear 'em asunder—
Send her to some dark cell to rave and shriek
And dwell with madness---and let instant death
Leave that rash youth a headless trunk before me.

Man. Now, by the ever-burning lamps that light
Our holy shrines, by great Coufucius' altar,
By the prime source of life, and light, and being,
That is my child, the blossom of my joys!
Send for his cruel father—he—'tis he
Intends a fraud---he, for a stranger's life,
Would yield his offspring to the cruel axe,
And rend a wretched mother's brain with madness!

Enter ZAMTI.

Zamti. Sure the sad accents of Mandane's voice
Struck on my frighted sense!

Timur. Once more, thou slave!
Who is that stubborn youth?

Zamti. Alas! what needs
This iteration of my griefs?

Man. Oh! horror!—horror!
Thou marble-hearted father!—'tis your child,
And would'st thou see him bleed?

Zamti. On him!---on him
Let fall your rage, and ease my soul at once
Of all it's fears!

Man. Oh! my devoted child!—— [*She faints.*

Hamet. Support her, Heav'n! support her tender frame!——

Now, tyrant, now I beg to live—[*kneels*] lo! here

I plead for life;—not for the wretched boon
To breathe the air, which thy ambition taints;—
But oh! to ease a mother's pains;—for her,
For that dear object---oh! let me live for her!

Timur. Now by the conquests this good sword has won,
In her wild vehemence of grief I hear
The genuine voice of Nature.

Man. [*recovering*] Ah!——where is he?
He is my son!---my child!—and not Zaphimri!——
Oh! let me clasp thee to my heart!——thy hard,
Thy cruel father shall not tear thee from me!

Timur. Hear me, thou frantic mourner, dry those tears—
Perhaps you still may save this darling son.

Man. Ah! quickly name the means!

Timur. Give up your king,
Your phantom of a king, to sate my vengeance.

Hamet. Oh! my much honour'd mother, never hear
The base, the dire proposal!—let me rather
Exhaust my life-blood at each gushing vein.
Mandane then—then you may well rejoice
To find your child—then you may truly know
The best delight a mother's heart can prove,
When her son dies with glory.

Timur. Curses blast
The stripling's pride——[*Talks apart with* Octar.

Zamti. Ye venerable host,
Ye mighty shades of China's royal line,
Forgive the joy that mingles with my tears,
When I behold him still alive!—Propitious Pow'rs!
You never meant entirely to destroy

This bleeding country, when your kind indulgence
Lends us a youth like him.
Oh! I can hold no more—let me infold
That lovely ardour in his father's arms—
My brave—my gen'rous boy!—— [*Embraces him.*

Timur. Dost thou at length
Confess it, traitor?

Zamti. Yes, I boast it, tyrant;
Boast it to thee—to earth and heav'n I boast,
This—this is Zamti's son!

Hamet. At length the hour,
The glorious hour is come, by Morat promis'd,
"When Hamet shall not blush to know his father."
[*Kneels to him.*

Zamti. Oh! thou intrepid youth!—what bright re-
Can your glad sire bestow on such desert? [ward
The righteous Gods and your own inward feelings
Shall give the sweetest retribution.——Now,
Mandane, now my soul forgives thee all,
Since I have made acquaintance with my son:
Thy lovely weakness I can now excuse;
But oh! I charge thee by a husband's right——

Timur. A husband's right!—a traitor has no right—
Society disclaims him—Woman, hear——
Mark well my words—Discolour not thy soul
With the black hue of crimes like his—renounce
All hymeneal vows, and take again
Your much-lov'd boy to his fond mother's arms,
While justice whirls that traitor to his fate.

Man. Thou vile adviser!—what, betray my lord,

My honour'd husband?——Turn a Scythian wife?
Forget the many years of fond delight,
In which my soul ne'er knew decreasing love,
Charm'd with his noble, all-accomplish'd mind?
No, tyrant, no!——with him I'll rather die;
With him in ruin more supremely blest,
Than guilt triumphant on it's throne.

Zamti. Now then,
Inhuman Tartar, I defy thy pow'r.
Lo! here, the father, mother, and the son!
Try all your tortures on us—here we stand
Resolv'd to leave a tract of bright renown
To mark our beings—all resolv'd to die
The votaries of honour!—— [the slaves,

Timur. Then die ye shall—what ho!—guards, seize
Deep in some baleful dungeon's midnight gloom
Let each apart be plung'd—and Etan too——
Let him be forthwith found—he too shall share
His father's fate.

Mir. Be it my task, dread Sir,
To make the rack ingenious in new pains,
Till even cruelty almost relent
At their keen, agonizing groans.

Timur. Be that,
Mirvan, thy care. Now by th' immortal Lama
I'll wrest this myst'ry from 'em---else the dawn
Shall see me up in arms---'gainst Corea's chief
I will unfurl my banners---his proud cities
Shall dread my thunder at their gates, and mourn
Their smoaking ramparts---o'er his verdant plains

And peaceful vales I'll drive my warlike car,
And deluge all the east with blood. [.

Oscar. Mirvan, do thou bear hence those misc
slaves.
Thou, Zamti, art my charge. [*Laying hold of*
Zamti. Willing I come——— [*Shakes hi*
The steady mind can scorn your mansions drear,
And brighten horror with it's noon-tide ray.
Mandane, summon all thy strength. My son,
Thy father doubts not of thy fortitude.
[*Exit, guarded by* O

Man. Allow me but one last embrace——
Hamet. Oh! mother, [*To the* Gu
Would I could rescue thee!
Man. Lost, lost again!
Hamet. Inhuman, bloody Tartars!
Oh! farewel!———[*Both together.*]
[*Exeunt, on different s*

ACT IV. SCENE I.

A Prison. HAMET *in Chains. Enter* ZAPHIMRI, (*guised in a Tartar Dress*) *with* MIRVAN.

Mirvan.

THERE stretch'd at length on the dank ground he
Scorning his fate. Your meeting must be short.
Zaph. It shall—
Mir. And yet I tremble for th' event:——

Why would'st thou venture to this place of danger?

Zaph. And can'st thou deem me then so mean of
To dwell secure in ignominious safety; [spirit;
With cold insensibility to wait
The ling'ring hours—with coward patience wait 'em,
Deliberating on myself, while ruin
Lods over Zamti's house?

Mir. Yet whilst thou'rt here,
Thy fate's suspended on each dreadful moment.

Zaph. I will hold converse with him, ev'n tho' death
Were arm'd against the interview.——[*Exit* Mirvan.

Hamet. [*still on the ground.*]—What wouldst thou,
Tartar?

Zaph. Rise, noble youth—no vulgar errand mine—

Hamet. [*comes forward.*] Now speak thy purpose.

Zaph. Under this disguise————

Hamet. If under that disguise, a murd'rer's dagger
Thirst for my blood—thus I can meet the blow.
[*Throwing himself open.*

Zaph. No ruffian's purpose lurks within this bosom.
To these lone walls, where oft the Scythian stabber
With murd'rous stride hath come; these walls that oft
Have seen th' assassin's deeds—I bring a mind
Firm, virtuous, upright. Under this vile garb,
Lo! here a son of China. [*Opens his dress.*

Hamet. Yes, thy garb
Denotes a son of China; and those eyes
Roll with no black intent.—Say on————

Zaph. Inflam'd with admiration of heroic deeds,
I come to seek acquaintance with the youth,

Who for his king would bravely die!

Hamet. Say then,
Dost thou applaud the deed?

Zaph. By heav'n, I do.
Yes, virtuous envy rises in my soul—
Thy ardour charms me, and ev'n now I pant
To change conditions with thee.——

Hamet. Then my heart
Accepts thy proffer'd friendship. In a base,
A prone, degen'rate age, when foreign force
And foreign manners have o'erwhelm'd us all,
And sunk our native genius—thou retain'st
A sense of ancient worth. But wherefore here,
To this sad mansion, this abode of sorrow,
Com'st thou to know a wretch that soon must die?

Zaph. By heav'n, thou shalt not die—I come to spe
The gladsome tidings of a happier fate.
—By me Zaphimri sends——

Hamet. Zaphimri sends!
Kind Pow'rs! Where is the king?

Zaph. His steps are safe;
Unseen as is the arrow's path. By me he says,
He knows, he loves, he wonders at thy virtue.
By me he swears, rather than thou should'st fall,
He will emerge from dark obscurity,
And greatly brave his fate.

Hamet. Ha!—die for me!
For me, ignoble in the scale of being!
An unimportant wretch! Whoe'er thou art,
I pr'ythee, stranger, bear my answer back—

Oh! tell my sov'reign that here dwells a heart
uperior to all peril. When I fall,
A worm—an insect dies!—But in his life
Are wrapp'd the glories of our ancient line,
The liberties of China! Then let him
Live for his people—be it mine to die.

Zaph. Can I bear this, ye Pow'rs, and not dissolve
In tears of gratitude and love? [*Aside.*

Hamet. Why streams
That flood of grief?—and why that stifled groan?
Through the dark mist his sorrow casts around him,
He seems no common man. Say, gen'rous youth,
Who, and what art thou?

Zaph. Who and what am I?
Thou lead'st me to a precipice, from whence
Downward to look, turns wild the mad'ning brain,
Scar'd at th' unfathomable deep below.
Who, and what am I?—Oh! the veriest wretch
That ever yet groan'd out his soul in anguish!
One lost, abandon'd, hopeless, plung'd in woe
Beyond redemption's aid.——To tell thee all
In one dire word, big with the last distress,
In one accumulated term of horror—
—Zaphimri!——

Hamet. Said'st thou!——

Zaph. He!—that fatal wretch,
Exalted into misery supreme.
Oh! I was happy, while good Zamti's son
I walk'd the common tracts of life, and strove
Humbly to copy my imagin'd sire.
But now——

Hamet. Yes now—if thou art he—as sure
'Tis wondrous like—rais'd to a state, in which
A nation's happiness on thee depends——

Zaph. A nation's happiness!—There, there I bleed
There are my pangs! For me this war began,
For me hath purple slaughter drench'd yon fields;
I am the cause of all. I forg'd those chains—
For Zamti and Mandane too—Oh! heavens!—
Them have I thrown into a dungeon's gloom.
These are the horrors of Zaphimri's reign.
—I am the tyrant!——I ascend the throne
By trampling on the neck of innocence—
By base ingratitude!—by the vile means
Of selfish cowardice, that can behold
Thee, and thy father, mother, all in chains,
All lost, all murder'd, that I thence may rise
Inglorious to a throne!

Hamet. Alas! thy spirit,
Thy wild disorder'd fancy pictures forth
Ills that are not——or, being ills, not worth
A moment's pause.

Zaph. Not ills? Thou can'st not mean it.
Oh! I'm environ'd with the worst of woes!
The angry Fates, amidst their hoards of vengeance
Had nought but this—they meant to render me
Peculiarly distress'd. Tell me, thou gallant youth
—A soul like thine knows ev'ry fine emotion—
Is there a fierve, in which the heart of man
Can prove such torture, as when thus it meets
Unequall'd friendship, honour, truth, and love,

And no return can make?———Oh! 'tis too much,
Ye mighty Gods, too much—thus, thus to be
A feeble prince, a shadow of a king,
Without the pow'r to wreak revenge on guilt,
Without the pow'r of doing Virtue right!

Hamet. That power will come.

Zaph. But when?—when thou art lost,
When Zamti and Mandane are destroy'd.
Oh! for a dagger's point, to plunge it deep,
Deep in this—ha!—deep in the tyrant's heart!

Hamet. There your revenge should point. For that great deed
Heav'n hath watch'd all thy ways; and wilt thou now
With headlong rage spurn at it's guardian care,
Nor wait the movements of eternal justice? [Heav'n

Zaph. Ha!—whither has my phrenzy stray'd? Yes,
Has been all-bounteous. Righteous Pow'rs!
To you my orisons are due—But oh!
Complete your goodness:—save this valiant youth;
Save Zamti's house; and then—if such your will,
That from the Tartar's head my arm this night
Shall grasp the crown of China---teach me then
To bear your dread vicegerency—I stand
Resign'd to your high will.

Hamet. And Heav'n, I trust,
Will still preserve thee; in it's own good time
Will finish it's decrees.

Zaph. Yes, Hamet, yes;
A gleam of hope remains. Should Timurkan
Defer his murder to the midnight hour,

Then will I come, then burst these guilty walls,
Rend those vile manacles, and give thee freedom.
Hamet. Oh! no---you must not risk.
Zaph. A band of heroes
For this are ready; honourably leagu'd
To vindicate their rights. Thy father's care
Plann'd and inspir'd the whole. Among the troop
Nay in his very guards, there are not wanting
Some gallant sons of China, in that hour,
Who will discover their long-pent-up fury,
And deal destruction round.
Hamet. What --all conven'd,
And ev'ry thing dispos'd?
Zaph. Determin'd!---Now
In silent terror all intent they stand,
And wait the signal in each gale that blows.
Hamet. Why did'st thou venture forth?
Zaph. What, poorly lurk [you
While my friends die!---that thought---but, gene
I'll not think meanly of thee---No---that thought
Is foreign to thy heart.
Hamet But think, my prince,
On China's wrongs, the dying heroes' groans;
Think on thy ancestors.
Zaph. My ancestors!
What is't to me a long-descended line,
A race of worthies, legislators, heroes,
Unless I bring their virtues too? No more—
Thy own example fires me. Near this place
I'll take my stand, and watch their busy motions,

ntil the gen'ral roar; then will I come,
nd arm thee for th' assault.

Hamet. Oh! if thou dost,
'et once again I'll wield the deathful blade,
nd bear against the foe.

Zaph. Yes, thou and I
Vill rush together through the paths of death,
low down our way, and with sad overthrow
'ursue the Tartar---like two rushing torrents,
hat from the mountain's top, 'midst roaring caves,
Midst rocks and rent up trees, foam headlong down,
And each depopulates his way.———

[*A flourish of trumpets.*

Hamet. What means
hat sudden and wild harmony?

Zaph. Even now
he conqu'ror, and his fell barbaric rout,
or this day's victory indulge their joy;
oy soon to end in groans---for all conspires
o forward our design---and lo! the lights
hat whilom blaz'd to heav'n, now rarely seen,
hed a pale glimmer, and the foe secure
inks down in deep debauch; while all awake,
he Genius of this land broods o'er the work
f justice and revenge.

Hamet. Oh! revel on,
till unsuspecting plunge in guilty joy,
And bury thee in riot!

Zaph. Ne'er again
To wake from that vile trance---for ere the dawn,

Detested spoiler, thy hot blood shall smoke
On the stain'd marble, and thy limbs abhorr'd
I'll scatter to the dogs of China.

Enter MIRVAN.

Mir. Break off your conf'rence---Octar this way comes.

Zaph. This garb will cloak me from each hostile eye;
Thou need'st not fear detection.

Enter OCTAR.

Mir. There's your pris'ner. [*Pointing to* Hamet.

Octar. Lead him to where Mandane's matron grief
Rings through yon vaulted roof.

Hamet. Oh! lead me to her!
Let me give balm to her afflicted mind,
And soften anguish in a parent's breast.

[*Exit, with* Mirvan.

Zaph. What may this mean? I dread some lurking mischief. [*Exit on the opposite side.*

Octar. When the boy clings around his mother's heart
In fond endearment, then to tear him from her,
Will once again awaken all her tenderness,
And in her impotence of grief, the truth
At length will burst it's way. But Timurkan
Impatient comes.

Enter TIMURKAN.

Octar. Thus with disorder'd looks,
Why will my sov'reign shun the genial banquet,

To seek a dungeon's gloom?

Timur. Oh! valiant Octar,
A more than midnight gloom involves my soul.
Hast thou beheld this stubborn Mandarine? [geance

Octar. I have; and tried by ev'ry threaten'd ven-
To bend his soul: unconquer'd yet by words,
He smiles contempt; as if some inward joy,
Like the sun, lab'ring in a night of clouds,
Shot forth it's glad'ning unresisted beams,
Cheering the face of woe.

Timur. What of Mandane?

Octar. At first with tears and bitter lamentations
She call'd on Hamet lost; but when I urg'd,
She still might save her boy, and save herself,
Would she but give Zaphimri to your wrath,
Her tears forgot to flow; her voice, her look,
Her colour sudden chang'd, and all her form
Enlarging with th' emotions of her soul,
Grew vaster to the sight. With blood-shot eyes
She cast a look of silent indignation,
Then turn'd in sullen mood away.

Timur. Perdition
O'erwhelm her pride!

Octar. Might I advise you, Sir,
An artful tale of love should softly glide
To her afflicted soul—a conqu'ror's sighs
Will waft a thousand wishes to her heart,
Till female vanity aspire to reach
The eastern throne; and when her virtue melts
In the soft tumult of her gay desires,

Win from her ev'ry truth, then spurn to shame
The weak, deluded woman.

Timur. Octar, no:
I cannot stoop with love-sick adulation
To thrill in languishing desire, and try
The hopes, the fears, and the caprice of love.
Enur'd to rougher scenes, far other arts
My mind employ'd: to sling the well-stor'd quiver
Over this manly arm, and wing the dart
At the fleet rein-deer, sweeping down the vale,
Or up the mountain, straining ev'ry nerve;
To vault the neighing steed, and urge his course
Swifter than whirlwinds; through the ranks of war
To drive my chariot-wheels, smoking with gore:
These are my passions, this my only science,
Above the puling sicknesses of love.
Bring that vile slave, the hoary priest, before me.

[*Exit* Octar.

Timur. By heav'n, their fortitude erects a fence
To shield 'em from my wrath, more pow'rful far
Than their high-boasted wall, which long hath stood
The shock of time, of war, of storms, and thunder,
The wonder of the world!
What art thou, Virtue, who can'st thus inspire
This stubborn pride, this dignity of soul,
And still unfading, beauteous in distress,
Can'st taste of joys my heart hath never known?

Enter ZAMTI, *in Chains.*

Timur. Mark me, thou traitor, thy detested sight

Once more I brook, to try if yet the sense
Of deeds abhorr'd as thine, has touch'd your soul.
Or clear this myst'ry, or by yonder heav'n
I'll hunt Zaphimri to his secret haunt,
Or spread a gen'ral carnage round the world.

Zamti. Thy rage is vain—far from thy ruthless pow'r
Kind heav'n protects him, till the awful truth
In some dread hour of horror and revenge
Shall burst like thunder on thee.

Timur. Ha! beware—
Nor rouse my lion-rage—yet, ere 'tis late,
Repent thee of thy crimes.

Zamti. The crime would be
To yield to thy unjust commands. But know,
A louder voice than thine forbids the deed;
The voice of all my kings! Forth from their tombs
Ev'n now they send a peal of groans to Heav'n,
Where all thy murders are long since gone up,
And stand in dread array against thee.

Timur. Murders!
Ungrateful Mandarine! Say, did not I,
When civil discord lighted up her brand,
And scatter'd wide her flames---when fierce contention
'Twixt Xohohamti and Zaphimri's father
Sorely convuls'd the realm---did not I then
Lead forth my Tartars from their northern frontier,
And bid fair order rise?

Zamti. Bid order rise!
Hast thou not smote us with a hand of wrath?
By thee each art has died, and ev'ry science

Gone out at thy fell blast. Art thou not come
To sack our cities, to subvert our temples,
The temples of our Gods, and with the worship,
The monstrous worship of your living Lama,
Profane our holy shrines?

Timur. Peace, insolent!
Nor dare with horrid treason to provoke
The wrath of injur'd majesty.

Zamti. Yes, tyrant,
Yes, thou hast smote us with a hand of wrath;
Full twenty years hast smote us; but at length
Will come the hour of Heav'n's just visitation,
When thou shalt rue—hear me, thou man of blood—
Yes, thou shalt rue the day, when thy fell rage
Imbrued those hands in royal blood. Now tremble—
The arm of the Most High is bar'd against thee—
And see!—the hand of Fate describes thy doom
In glaring letters on yon rubied wall!
Each gleam of light is perish'd out of Heav'n,
And darkness rushes o'er the face of earth.

Timur. Think'st thou, vile slave, with visionary fears
I e'er can shrink appall'd? Thou moon-struck seer!
No more I'll bear this mockery of words:
Or straight resolve me, or by hell and vengeance,
Unheard-of torment waits thee.

Zamti. Know'st thou not
I offer'd up my boy? And after that,
After that conflict, think'st thou there is aught
Zamti has left to fear?———

Timur. Yes, learn to fear

My will, my sov'reign will, which here is law,
And treads upon the neck of slaves.

Zamti. Thy will
The law in China! Ill-instructed man!
Now learn an awful truth——Though ruffian pow'r
May for a while suppress all sacred order,
And trample on the rights of man, the soul,
Which gave our legislation life and vigour,
Shall still subsist, above the tyrant's reach:—
The spirit of the laws can never die.

Timur. I'll hear no more. What ho!

Enter OCTAR *and Guards.*

Bring forth Mandane——
Ruin involves ye all—this very hour
Shall see your son impal'd: yes, both your sons.
Let Etan be brought forth.

Octar. Etan, my liege,
Is fled for safety.

Timur. Thou pernicious slave! [*To* Zamti.
Him too would'st thou withdraw from justice?—him
Would'st thou send hence to Corea's realm, to brood
O'er some new work of treason? By the pow'rs
Who feel a joy in vengeance, and delight
In human blood, I will unchain my fury
On all, who trace Zaphimri in his years;
But chief on thee and thy devoted race.

Enter MANDANE *and* HAMET. MIRVAN *guarding them, &c.*

Timur. Woman, attend my words—instant reveal
This dark conspiracy, and save thyself.
If wilful thou wilt spurn the joys that woo thee,
The rack shall have it's prey.

Man. It is in vain.
I tell thee, Homicide, my soul is bound
By solemn vows: and would'st thou have me break
What angels wafted on their wings to Heav'n?

Timur. Renounce your rash resolves, nor court destruction.

Man. Goddess of Vengeance, from your realms above,
Where near the throne of the Most High thou dwell'st,
Inspher'd in darkness, amidst hoards of thunder,
Serenely dreadful, till dire human crimes
Provoke thee down; now, on the whirlwind's wing
Descend, and with your flaming sword, your bolts
Red with almighty wrath, let loose your rage,
And blast this vile seducer in his guilt. [boy.

Timur. Blind frantic woman!—think on your lov'd

Man. That tender struggle's o'er—if he must die,
I'll greatly dare to follow.

Timur. Then forthwith
I'll put thee to the proof—Drag forth the boy
To instant death—— [*They seize* Hamet.

Hamet. Come on then——Lead me hence
To some new world where justice reigns, for here
Thy iron hand is stretch'd o'er all. [*Exit, guarded.*

Timur. Quick, drag him forth.

Man. Now by the Pow'rs above, by ev'ry tie
Of humanizing pity, seize me first;
Oh! spare my child, and end his wretched mother!

Timur. Thou plead'st in vain.

Enter a Messenger *in haste.*

Mess. Etan, dread Sir, is found.

Zamti. Ah! China totters on the brink of ruin! [*Aside.*

Timur. Where lurk'd the slave?

Mess. Emerging from disguise,
He rush'd amid the guards that led forth Hamet:
"Suspend the stroke," he cry'd: then crav'd admittance
To your dread presence, on affairs, he says,
Of highest import to your throne and life.

Zamti. Ruin impends. [*Aside.*] Heed not an idle boy.—— [*To* Timurkan.

Timur. Yes, I will see him: bring him straight before me.

Zamti. Angels of light, quick on the rapid wing
Dart from the throne of grace, and hover round him!

Enter ZAPHIMRI, *Guards following him.*

Timur. hou com'st on matters of importance Tdeep
Unto my throne and life——

Zaph. I do.——This very hour
Thy death is plotting.

Timur. Ha!——by whom?

Zaph. Zaphimri!
Zamti. What means my son?——
Timur. Quick, give him to my rage,
And mercy shall to thee extend.
Zaph. Think not
I meanly come to save this wretched being.
Pity Mandane—save her tender frame!—[*Kneels.*
Pity that youth!—oh! save that godlike man!
Zamti. Wilt thou dishonour me, degrade thyself,
Thy native dignity, by basely kneeling?
Quit that vile posture.
Timur. Rash intruder, hence.——— [*To* Zamti.
Hear me, thou stripling;—or unfold thy tale,
Or by yon heav'n they die—Would'st thou appease my wrath,
Bring me Zaphimri's head.
Zaph. Will that suffice?
Zamti. Oh! Heavens! [*Aside.*
Timur. It will———
Zaph. Then take it, tyrant.
[*Rising up, and pointing to himself.*
Zamti and Hamet. Ah!——
Zaph. I am Zaphimri—I your mortal foe!
Zamti. Now by yon heav'n, it is not——
Zaph. Here——strike here——
Since nought but royal blood can quench thy thirst,
Unsluice these veins—but spare their matchless lives.
Timur. Would'st thou deceive me too?
Zamti. He would———
Zaph. No——here,

Here on his knees, Zaphimri begs to die.

Zamti. Oh! horror, 'tis my son!—by great Confucius,
That is my Etan, my too gen'rous boy,
That fain would die to save his aged sire!

Man. Alas! all's ruin'd—freedom is no more! [*Aside.*

Zaph. Yet hear me, Tartar—hear the voice of truth—
I am your victim—by the Gods, I am.
[*Laying hold of* Timurkan.

Timur. Thou early traitor!—by your guilty sire
Train'd up in fraud—no more these arts prevail.
My rage is up in arms, ne'er to know rest,
Until Zaphimri perish.—Off, vile slave!——
This very moment sweep 'em from my sight.

Man. Alas! my husband—Oh! my son—my son!—

Zamti. May all the host of Heav'n protect him still!
[*Exeunt* Zamti *and* Mandane, *guarded by* Octar, &c.

ZAPHIMRI, *struggling with* TIMURKAN, *on his knees.*

Zaph. Ah! yet withhold—in pity hold a moment—
I am Zaphimri—I resign my crown——— [hold

Timur. Away, vain boy! Go see them bleed; be-
How they will writhe in pangs; pangs doom'd for thee,
And ev'ry stripling through the East. Vile slave,
away! [*Breaks from him, and exit.*

ZAPHIMRI, *lying on the Ground; Officers and Guards behind him.*

Oh! cruel!——yet a moment—barbarous Scythians!
Wilt thou not open, earth, and take me down,
Down to thy caverns of eternal darkness,

From this supreme of woe? Here will I lie,
Here on thy flinty bosom—with this breast
I'll harrow up my grave, and end at once
This pow'rless wretch—this ignominious king!
And sleeps almighty Justice? Will it not
Now waken all it's terrors?—arm yon band
Of secret heroes with avenging thunder? [slou
By heaven that thought [*rising*] lifts up my kindling
With renovated fire. [*Aside.*] My glorious friends,
(Who now convene big with your country's fate)
When I am dead—oh! give me just revenge!
Let not my shade rise unaton'd amongst ye;
Let me not die inglorious; make my fall,
With some great act of yet unheard-of vengeance,
Resound throughout the world; that farthest Scythia
May stand appall'd at the huge distant roar
Of one vast ruin tumbling on the heads
Of this fell tyrant, and his hated race.

[*Exit, guarded.*

ACT V. SCENE I.

The Palace. Enter OCTAR, ZAMTI *and* MANDANE *following him.*

Zamti.

WHY dost thou lead us to this hated mansion?
Must we again behold the tyrant's frown?
Thou know'st our hearts are fix'd.

Octar. The war of words

We scorn again to wage: thither ye come
Beneath a monarch's eye to meet your doom.
The rack is now preparing: Timurkan
Shall soon behold your pangs, and count each groan
Ev'n to the fullest luxury of vengeance.
Guard well that passage: [*to the Guards within.*]—
see these traitors find
No means of flight; while to the conqueror
I hasten, to receive his last commands.
[*Exit* Octar, *on the opposite side.*

Zamti. Thou ever faithful creature!——

Man. Can'st thou, Zamti,
Still call me faithful? By that honour'd name
Wilt thou call her, whose mild maternal love
Hath overwhelm'd us all?

Zamti. Thou art my wife,
Whose matchless excellence, ev'n in bondage,
Hath cheer'd my soul; but now thy ev'ry charm,
By virtue waken'd, kindled by distress
To higher lustre, all my passions beat
Unutterable gratitude and love.
And must—oh! cruel!—must I see thee bleed?

Man. For me death wears no terror on his brow.
Full twenty years hath this resounding breast
Been smote with these sad hands; these haggard eyes
Have seen my country's fall; my dearest husband—
My son—my king—all in the Tartar's hands:
What then remains for me? Death—only death.

Zamti. Ah! can thy tenderness endure the pangs
Inventive cruelty ev'n now designs?——

Must this fair form—this soft perfection bleed?
Thy decent limbs be strain'd with cruel cords
To glut a ruffian's rage?———

Man. Alas! this frame,
This feeble texture never can sustain it.
But this—this I can bear—— [*Shews a dagger*

Zamti. Ha!

Man. Yes!——this dagger!
Do thou but lodge it in this faithful breast,
My heart shall spring to meet thee.

Zamti. Oh!———

Man. Do thou,
My honour'd lord, who taught me every virtue,
Afford this friendly, this last human office,
And teach me now to die.

Zamti. Oh! never——never——
Hence let me bear this fatal instrument.
[*Takes the dagger*
What, to usurp the dread prerogative
Of life and death, and measure out the thread
Of our own beings!—'tis the coward's act,
Who dares not to encounter pain and peril.
Be that the practice of th' untutor'd savage;
Be it the practice of the gloomy North.

Man. Must we then wait a haughty tyrant's nod,
The vassals of his will?—No—let us rather
Nobly break through the barriers of this life,
And join the beings of some other world,
Who'll throng around our greatly daring souls,
And view the deed with wonder and applause.

ORPHAN of CHINA.

Act V. Sc. I.

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R L

Zamti. Distress too exquisite!---Ye holy Pow'rs,
If aught below can supersede your law,
And plead for wretches, who dare, self-impell'd,
Rush to your awful presence;---oh!---it is not
When the distemper'd passions rage, when pride
Is stung to madness, when ambition falls
From his high scaffolding;—oh! no. If aught
Can justify the blow, it is when Virtue
Has nothing left to do; when Liberty
No more can breathe at large; 'tis with the groans
Of our dear country when we dare to die.

Man. Then here at once direct the friendly steel.

Zamti. One last adieu!---now!---ah! does this become
Thy husband's love?—thus with uplifted blade
Can I approach that bosom-bliss, where oft
With other looks than these---oh! my Mandane!—
I've hush'd my cares within thy shelt'ring arms?

Man. Alas! the loves that hover'd o'er our pillows
Have spread their pinions, never to return,
And the pale Fates surround us!——
Then lay me down in honourable rest:
Come, as thou art, all hero, to my arms,
And free a virtuous wife.

Zamti. It must be so.
Now then prepare thee——My arm flags and droops,
Conscious of thee in ev'ry trembling nerve.
[*Dashes down the dagger.*
By heav'n, once more I would not raise the point
Against that hoard of sweets, for endless years
Of universal empire.

Man. Ha! the fell ministers of wrath---and yet
They shall not long insult us in our woes.
Myself will still preserve the means of death.
[*Takes up the dagger.*

Enter TIMURKAN *and* OCTAR.

Timur. Now then, detested pair, your hour is come---
Drag forth these slaves to instant death and torment.
I hate this dull delay; I burn to see them
Gasping in death, and welt'ring in their gore.

Man. Zamti, support my steps—with thee to die
Is all the boon Mandane now would crave.
[*Exeunt* Mandane *and* Zamti.

Timur. Those rash, presumptuous boys, are they brought forth?

Octar. Mirvan will lead the victims to their fate.

Timur. And yet what boots their death?---the Orphan lives,
And in this breast fell horror and remorse
Must be the dire inhabitants.---Oh! Octar,
These midnight visions shake my inmost soul!

Octar. And shall the shad'wings of a feverish brain
Disturb a conqu'ror's breast?——

Timur. Octar, they've made
Such desolation here—'tis drear and horrible!——
On yonder couch, soon as sleep clos'd my eyes,
All that yon mad enthusiastic priest
In mystic rage denounc'd, rose to my view;
And ever and anon a livid flash,
From conscience shot, shew'd to my aching sight

The colours of my guilt———
Billows of blood were round me; and the ghosts,
The ghosts of heroes, by my rage destroy'd,
Came with their ghastly orbs, and streaming wounds;
They stalk'd around my bed;—with loud acclaim
They call'd Zaphimri! 'midst the lightning's blaze
Heav'n roll'd consenting thunders o'er my head;
Straight from his covert the youth sprung upon me,
And shook his gleaming steel—he hurl'd me down,
Down, headlong down the drear——hold, hold! where
am I?——
Oh! this dire whirl of thought---my brain's on fire!

Octar. Compose this wild disorder of thy soul.
Your foes this moment die.

Enter MIRVAN.

Timur. What would'st thou, Mirvan?

Mir. Near to the eastern gate, a slave reports,
As on his watch he stood, a gleam of arms
Cast a dim lustre through the night; and straight
The steps of men thick sounded in his ear:
In close array they march'd.

Timur. Some lurking treason!———
What, ho! my arms---ourself will sally forth.

Mir. My liege, their scanty and rash-levied crew
Want not a monarch's sword---the valiant Octar,
Join'd by yon faithful guard, will soon chastise them.

Timur. Then be it so---Octar, draw off the guard,
And bring their leaders bound in chains before me.

[*Exit* Octar.

Mir. With sure conviction we have further learn'd
The long-contended truth—Etan's their king—
The traitor Zamti counted but one son;
And him he sent far hence to Corea's realm,
That should it e'er be known the prince surviv'd,
The boy might baffle justice.

Timur. Ha! this moment
Ourself will see him fall.

Mir. Better, my liege,
At this dead hour you sought repose—mean time
Justice on him shall hold her course. Your foes
Else might still urge that you delight in blood.
The semblance of humanity will throw
A veil upon ambition's deeds—'tis thus
That mighty conqu'rors thrive;—and ev'n Vice,
When it would prosper, borrows Virtue's mien.

Timur. Mirvan, thou counsel'st right: beneath a shew
Of public weal we lay the nations waste.
And yet these eyes shall never know repose,
Till they behold Zaphimri perish. Mirvan,
Attend me forth.

Mir. Forgive, my sov'reign liege,
Forgive my over-forward zeal——I knew
It was not fitting he should breathe a moment:
The truth once known, I rush'd upon the victim,
And with this sabre cleft him to the ground.

Timur. Thanks to great Lama!—treason is no more,
And their boy king is dead. Mirvan, do thou
This very night bring me the stripling's head.
Soon as the dawn shall purple yonder east,

Aloft in air all China shall behold it,
Parch'd by the sun, and welt'ring to the wind:
Haste, Mirvan, haste, and sate my fondest wish.

Mir. This hour approves my loyalty and truth. [*Ex.*

Timur. Their deep-laid plot hath miss'd it's aim, and Timurkan
May reign secure. No longer horrid dreams
Shall hover round my couch: the prostrate world
Henceforth shall learn to own my sov'reign sway.

Enter MIRVAN.

Timur. Well, Mirvan, hast shou brought the wish'd-for pledge? [horror!

Mir. My liege, I fear 'twill strike thy soul with

Zaph. By heav'n, the sight will glad my longing eyes,
Oh! give it to me!——

Enter ZAPHIMRI *(a Sabre in his Hand) and plants himself before the Tyrant.*

Timur. Ha! then all is lost.

Zaph. Now, bloody Tartar, now then know Zaphimri.

Timur. Accursed treason!---To behold thee thus
Alive before me, blasts my aching eye-balls:
My blood forgets to move; each pow'r dies in me.

Zaph. Well may'st thou tremble, well may guilt like thine
Shrink back appall'd;---for now avenging Heav'n
In me sends forth it's minister of wrath,
To deal destruction on thee.——

Timur. Treach'rous slave!
Tis fal'se!---with coward-art, a base assassin,
A midnight ruffian on my peaceful hour
Secure thou com'st, thus to assault a warrior
Thy heart could never dare to meet in arms. [see'st
Zaph. Not meet thee, Tartar?---ha!---in me thou
One on whose head unnumber'd wrongs thou'st heap'd;
Else could I scorn thee, thus defenceless.---Yes,
By all my great revenge, could bid thee try each shape,
Assume each horrid form, come forth array'd
In all the terrors of destructive guilt;——
But now a dear, a murder'd father calls;
He lifts my arm to rivet thee to earth,
Th' avenger of mankind.
Mir. Fall on, my prince.
Timur. By Heav'n, I'll dare thee still. Resign it, slave,
Resign thy blade to nobler hands.
[*Snatches* Mirvan's *sabre.*
Mir. Oh! horror!
What ho! bring help!—Let not the fate of China
Hang on the issue of a doubtful combat.
Timur. Come on, presumptuous boy!
Zaph. Inhuman regicide!
Now, lawless ravager, Zaphimri comes
To wreak his vengeance on thee. [*Exeunt fighting.*
Mir. [*solus.*] Oh! nerve his arm, ye Pow'rs, and guide each blow!

Enter HAMET.

Mir. See there!—behold—he darts upon his prey.—

Zaph. [*within.*] Die, bloodhound, die!
Timur. [*within.*] May curses blast my arm
at fail'd so soon!——
Hamet. The Tartar drops his point.
phimri now———
Timur. [*within.*] —Have mercy!—mercy!—oh!—
Zaph. [*within.*] Mercy was never thine.---This, fell
destroyer,
is, for a nation's groans!——
Mir. The monster dies;
quivers on the ground. Then let me fly
Zamti and Mandane with the tidings,
d call them back to liberty and joy. [*Exit* Mirvan.

Enter ZAPHIM RI.

Zaph. Now, Hamet, now oppression is no more:
is smoking blade hath drunk the tyrant's blood.
Hamet. China again is free! There lies the corse
at breath'd destruction to the world.
Zaph. Yes, there,
rannic guilt, behold thy fatal end,
e wages of thy sins.

Enter MORAT.

Morat. Where is the king?
enge now stalks abroad. Our valiant leaders,
ie to the destin'd hour, at once broke forth
m ev'ry quarter on th' astonish'd foe:
ar is fall'n; all cover'd o'er with wounds
met his fate; and still the slaught'ring sword

Invades the city, sunk in sleep and wine.

Zaph. Lo! Timurkan lies levell'd with the dust!
Send forth, and let Orasming straight proclaim
Zaphimri king—my subjects rights restor'd.

[*Exit* Morat.

Now, where is Zamti? where Mandane?—ha!
What means that look of wan despair?

Enter MIRVAN.

Mir. Oh! dire mischance!
While here I trembled for the great event,
The unrelenting slaves, whose trade is death,
Began their work. Nor piety, nor age,
Could touch their felon-hearts; they seiz'd on Zamti,
And bound him on the wheel. All frantic at the sight,
Mandane plung'd a poniard in her heart,
And at her husband's feet expir'd.

Hamet. Oh! Heavens!
My mother!———

Zaph. Fatal rashness!——Mirvan, say,
Is Zamti too destroy'd?

Mir. Smiling in pangs,
We found the good, the venerable man:
Releas'd from anguish, with what strength remain'd,
He reach'd the couch where lost Mandane lay; [body,
There threw his mangled limbs; there, clinging to the
Prints thousand kisses on her clay-cold lips,
And pours his sad lamentings, in a strain
Might call each pitying angel from the sky,
To sympathize with human woe.

[*The great Folding-doors open in the back Scene.*

Zaph. And see,
See on that mournful bier he clasps her still;
Still hangs upon each faded feature; still
To her deaf ear complains in bitter anguish.
Heart-piercing sight!

Hamet. Oh! agonizing scene!

[*The corpse is brought forward,* Zamti *lying on the couch, and clasping the dead body.*]

Zamti. Ah! stay, Mandane, stay!—yet once again
Let me behold the day-light of thy eyes!——
Gone, gone—for ever, ever gone! Those orbs
That ever gently beam'd, must dawn no more! [joys?

Zaph. Are these our triumphs?—these our promis'd

Zamti. The music of that voice recalls my soul.

[*Rises from the body, and runs eagerly to embrace* Zaphimri; *his strength fails him, and he falls at his feet.*]

My prince! my king!

Zaph. Soft, raise him from the ground.

Zamti. Zaphimri!—Hamet too!—Oh! bless'd event!
I could not hope such tidings—Thee, my prince—
Thee too, my son—I thought ye both destroy'd.
My slow remains of life cannot endure
These strong vicissitudes of grief and joy. [dane!
And there—oh! Heaven!—see there, there lies Man-

Hamet. How fares it now, my father?

Zamti. Lead me to her———
Is that the ever dear, the faithful woman?

Is that my wife?——And is it thus at length,
Thus do I see thee then, Mandane?—Cold,
Alas! death-cold———
Cold is that breast, where virtue from above
Made its delighted sojourn, and those lips
That utter'd heav'nly truth—pale! pale!—dead, dea
[*Sinks on the bo*
Pray ye entomb me with her! [quests bac

Zaph. Then take, ye Pow'rs, then take your co
Zaphimri never can survive———

Zamti. [*Raising himself.*] I charge thee live:
A base desertion of the public weal
Can ne'er become a king.—Alas! my son——
(By that dear tender name if once again
Zarm ti may call thee)—tears will have theiway!
Forgive this flood of tenderness: my heart
Melts even now! Thou noble youth, this is
The only interview we e'er shall have.

Zaph. And will ye then, inexorable Pow'rs,
Will ye then tear him from my aching heart?

Zamti. The moral duties of the private man
Are grafted in thy soul—oh! still remember
The mean immutable of happiness,
Or in the vale of life, or on a throne,
Is Virtue. Each bad action of a king
Extends beyond his life, and acts again
It's tyranny o'er ages yet unborn.
To error mild, severe to guilt, protect
The helpless innocent; and learn to feel
The best delight of serving human kind.

Be these, my prince, thy arts; be these thy cares,
And live the father of a willing people. [lips
Hamet. Oh! cruel!—see—ah! see!—he dies!—his
Tremble in agony—his eye balls glare!—
A death-like paleness spreads o'er all his face!
Zaph. Is there no help to save so dear a life?
Zamti. It is too late—I die—alas! I die!——
Life harrass'd out, pursu'd with barb'rous art,
Through ev'ry trembling joint—now fails at once!
Zaphimri—oh! farewel!—I shall not see
The glories of thy reign.—Hamet!—my son—
Thou good young man, farewel!—Mandane, yes,
My soul with pleasure takes her flight, that thus
Faithful in death, I leave these cold remains
Near thy dear honour'd clay. [*Dies.*
Zaph. And art thou gone,
Thou best of men?—Then must Zaphimri pine
In ever-during grief, since thou art lost;
Since that firm patriot, whose parental care
Should raise, should guide, should animate my virtues,
Lies there a breathless corse.
Hamet. My liege, forbear:
Live for your people; madness and despair
Belong to woes like mine.
Zaph. Thy woes, indeed,
Are deep, thou pious youth—yes, I will live,
To soften thy afflictions; to assuage
A nation's grief, when such a pair expires.
Come to my heart:—in thee another Zamti
Shall bless the realm. Now let me hence to hail

My people with the sound of peace ; that done,
To these a grateful monument shall raise,
With all sepulchral honour. Frequent there
We'll offer incense ;—there each weeping muse
Shall grave the tributary verse ;—with tears
Embalm their memories ; and teach mankind,
Howe'er Oppression stalk the groaning earth,
Yet Heav'n, in it's own hour, can bring relief;
Can blast the tyrant in his guilty pride,
And prove the Orphan's guardian to the last.

EPILOGUE.

SPOKEN BY MRS. YATES.

THROUGH five long acts I've worn my sighing face,
Confin'd by critic laws to time and place;
Yet that once done, I ramble as I please,
Cry London Hoy! *and whisk o'er land and seas——*
Ladies, excuse my dress---'tis true Chinese.
Thus, quit of husband, death, and tragic strain,
Let us enjoy our dear small talk again.
How could this bard successful hope to prove?
So many heroes---and not one in love!
No suitor here to talk of flames that thrill;
To say the civil thing——"Your eyes so kill!"——
No ravisher, to force us——to our will!
You've seen their eastern virtues, patriot passions,
And now for something of their taste and fashions.
"O Lord! that's charming,"—cries my Lady Fidget,
"I long to know it—Do the creatures visit?
"Dear Mrs. Yates, do, tell us—Well, how is it?"
First, as to beauty——Set your hearts at rest——
They've all broad foreheads, and pigs eyes at best.
And then they lead such strange, such formal lives!—
—A little more at home than English wives:
Lest the poor things should roam and prove untrue,
They all are crippled in the tiny shoe.
A hopeful scheme to keep a wife from madding!
—We pinch our feet, and yet are ever gadding.

Then they've no cards, no routs, ne'er take their fling,
And tin money is an unheard-of thing!
Then how d'ye think they write----You'll ne'er divine—
From top to bottom down in one straight line. [Mimics.
We ladies, when our flames we cannot smother,
Write letters---from one corner to another. [Mimics.
One mode there is in which both climes agree;
I scarce can tell----'mongst friends then let it be----
---The creatures love to cheat as well as we.
But blese my wits! I've quite forgot the bard—
A civil soul!---By me he sends this card—
"Presents respects---*to ev'ry lady here—*
"Hopes for the honour---*of a single tear.*"
The critics then will throw their dirt in vain,
One drop from you will wash out ev'ry stain.
Acquaints you---*(now the man is past his fright)*
He holds his rout---and here he keeps his night.
Assures you all a welcome, kind and hearty,
The ladies shall play crowns--and there's the shilling party.
[Points to the upper gallery.